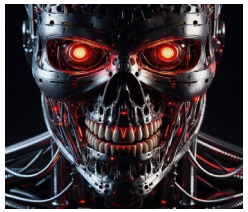
University of Southampton

Building confidence and agency: a whole-institution approach to AI Fluency

Professor Kate Borthwick
University of Southampton

29 May 2026

Hype and hope: May 2026



AI bot ChatGPT stuns academics with essay-writing skills and usability

The Guardian, 4 Dec 2022

ChatGPT: tool or terminator?

OpenAI's chatbot has wowed the world by producing astonishingly well-formed written responses to questions. Is it about to turn academia upside down?

THE, 19 Jan, 2023 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/chatgpt-tool-or-terminator

ChatGPT's potential to enhance student skills must not be dismissed

University educators may not fully understand generative AI or its long-term impact on society, but they must seek to integrate the technology into degree courses, says Stephanie Marshall

THE, 2 Sept 2023 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/chatgpts-potential-enhance-student-skills-must-not-be-dismissed

Student AI cheating cases soar at UK universities

THE, 01 Nov 2024 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/student-ai-cheating-cases-soar-uk-universities

Anthropic boss: 'huge demand' for our AI models in the UK

The Times, 22 May 2025, https://www.thetimes.com/business-money/technology/article/anthropic-boss-huge-demand-for-our-ai-models-in-the-uk-x62lc8973

OpenAI launches new model with human-like reasoning

The Times, 2024

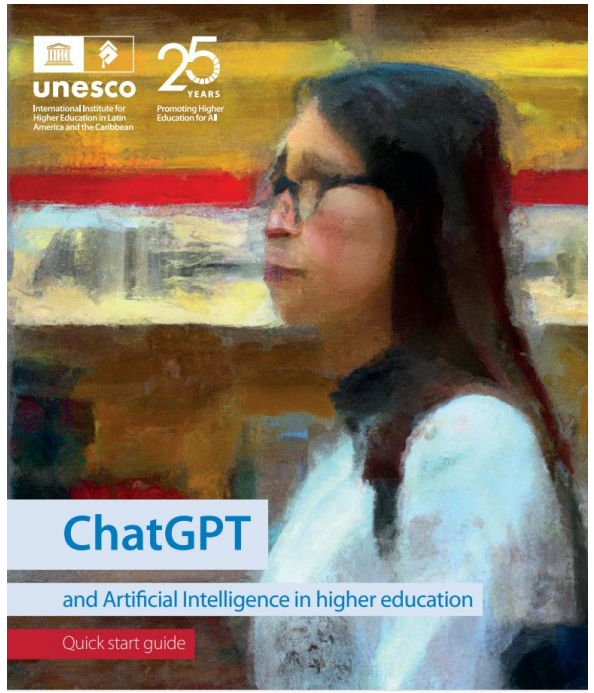
Agentic AI and the next intelligence explosion

Science.org, 2026

The magic of AI is still 'in the air…'

GenAI can be seen as playing 'pedagogic roles' e.g.

- a study buddy (checking vocab, giving summaries, defining topics)
- socratic opponent (taking on a persona)
- co-designer (assisting through the design of a piece of work)
- collaborator (editing work, suggesting new approaches)
- possibility engine (suggesting ideas/new expressions/vocab)
- Exploratorium (experimenting)
- Personal tutor (giving corrective feedback)
- Co-creator (creating learning resources)



(UNESCO, 2023)

= learning support assistant for personalized, flexible learning

= teaching support assistant for personalized teaching

…but so are the flaws

Prompt to Copilot:
‘Create an image of a Professor of Digital Education at a UK University’

2025 version

2026 version

- Bias, misinformation in its training data, homogeny of information, limited perspectives
- Willingness to please
- 100% confidence in its data and desire to please (so will make stuff up)
- AI detection – who has done the work?
- Ethics in moderation of training models; environmental impact
- Digital divides (wealth, AI skills, gender, STEM vs Arts/Hums)

How are students using GenAI?

- **95% using AI in some way, 94% to assist in producing assessed work**
- Common uses: explaining concepts, summarising texts, structuring ideas
- **Emotional use of AI 'as a friend' – 15% using AI for advice, address loneliness**
- 68% see AI skills as essential 'to thrive' yet only 48% feel teaching staff are helping
- 51% have prior experience of AI at school/college but 33% had none
- 49% - AI makes the student experience better yet…
- …fears cited: feeling of isolation; being accused of cheating; loss of critical abilities; lower grades

Some polarisation: AI increases and decreases loneliness; some like and use AI some really don't; some institutions encourage use of AI, others don't

(Higher Education Policy Institute - https://www.hepi.ac.uk/reports/student-generative-ai-survey-2026/

Other recent reports (WonkHE, ScAITEN)

- **AI use is not one single behaviour. It is used in variable ways for different tasks even on the same assignment – policies and approaches must reflect that**
- Widespread use of AI for searching – a crucial starting point for many in study
- Drivers of AI use: time poverty; structural issues; lack of functional clarity on AI policy
- Students overwhelmingly value learning with peers - where students feel they belong, they use AI less

(WonkHE 2026 – Trained to stop Learning)

- Use of AI for studies: 38% - rarely/never; 21% - occasionally; 40% - frequently
- Concerns: environmental impact; ethical considerations; deskilling
- Lack of clarity on how/why to use AI
- **Variance of views on AI within different groups**

(GenAI in Scottish Higher Education, Staff and Students Attitudes and Perceptions, ScAITEN, 2026)

And in language education…a shock!

- Production of "*novel…grammatical sentences in connected discourse in real-time conversation with the user.*"
- A jump forward from previous linguistic tools: *"The public had also become accustomed to the limited linguistic responsiveness of technologies trained to reply to a set of expressions, produce rough translations of short texts, and suggest corrections to their grammar and spelling.* ***None of the capabilities observed in yesterday's technologies prepared the public for the linguistic adeptness of ChatGPT"***
- Opportunity for personalised, interactive language practice that 'goes beyond' previous classroom possibilities

- Chapelle, 2025

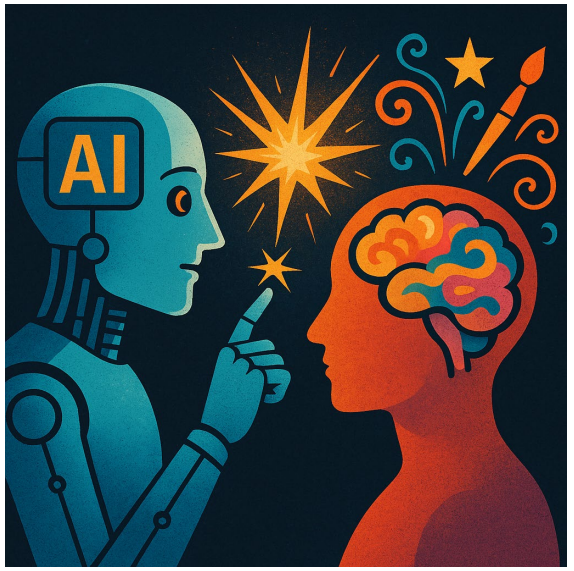
A game-changer?

"*GenAI-based tools such as Chat-GPT appear to be a **game-changer** for second language learning because of their capacity to impact the core components of language education including professional understanding of practices in language pedagogy, language assessment, second language acquisition, and language teacher education.*" – Chapelle, 2025

- AI is not simply 'another tool'
- Reshapes how learners make meaning, express themselves, acquire new language/knowledge

Changing the game in a good way

- Content generation of all kinds – personalised, targeted for an individual or a class
- Assessments/grammar quizzes/texts of different genres
- Discovering linguistic or cultural content; vocabulary checking and generation
- Error noticing and correction
- Genre comparison, analysis reflection
- Conversation/interaction practice in multiple languages
- Translation of all kinds: verbal, text, imagery
- Creativity – sparking new ideas; enabling creative tasks



Greater teacher and learner autonomy

Opportunity for teacher-creativity: liberation from constraints of traditional resources?

Further impact: the changing game

Research:

- Increased submissions to key CALL conferences (EUROCALL, CALL) and journals (ReCALL, CALL)
- Reflecting experimentation and exploration to support practice.
- Inspired and enabled by AI

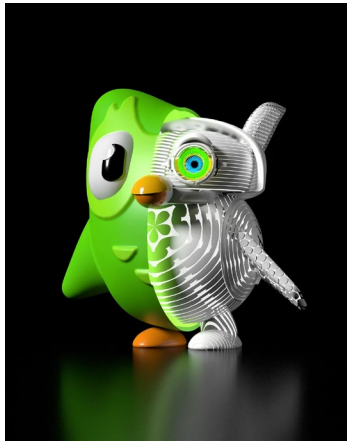
Linguistic 'democratisation'

- Support for minority languages
- Access to language knowledge

By Jessie Lau 26th June 2025

More than a century after colonisation, the Ainu language almost vanished. Now machines are listening to hours of old recordings and learning to give it a new voice.

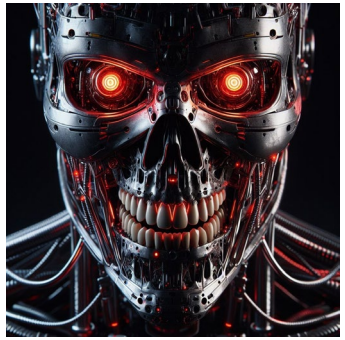
https://www.bbc.co.uk/future/article/20250625-can-ai-speak-the-language-japan-tried-to-kill



Duolingo's AI Revolution - by Dr Philippa Hardman

Cognitive impact: the ‘magic’ of AI

- Over-reliance on AI hinders active engagement in learning and foundational learning;
- Cognitive ‘off-loading’ diminishes complex thinking;
- Use of AI fosters misplaced over-confidence in knowledge
- Fosters overly-trusting relationship with AI



(Fan et al, 2025, Gerlich, 2024, Jost et al, 2024)

Language education

- Importance of developing foundational knowledge: grammar, vocabulary, skills
- Cognitive benefits of knowing language (see Barac & Bialystok, 2012)
- Challenge and empathy can foster effective language learning (DELTEA project, 2025)
- Diversity in language under threat e.g. standardisation of English via AI (Jeon et al, 2024)

Integrating AI skills and understanding = AI literacy

Human vs AI:

- Human strengths: contextual and ethical awareness, emotion, creativity, critical thinking, empathy, complex social interactions
- AI strengths: rapid data processing, aggregation, synthesis; generation, transformation of multimodal content

Concepts of AI literacy and languages – 'Co-literacy':

- Meaning-making: social, communicative, in writing, through co-design and collaboration
- "*As AI becomes increasingly embedded in communicative practices, literacy can no longer be understood as an exclusively human practice*" (Alm, 2025: 63)

(Alm, 2025: 53-77)

Aligns to Chapelle (2025):

TPACK (Mishra & Kohler, 2006) + linguistic and cultural knowledge = important in AI use

GenAI at Southampton – our position

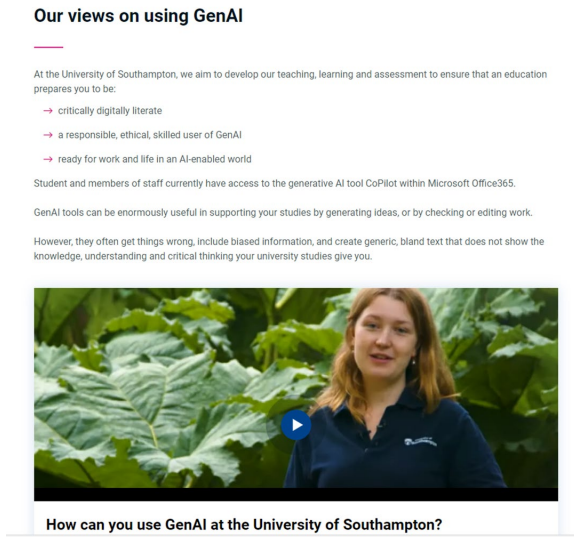
To develop our teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that an education at UoS prepares students to be critically digitally literate and responsible, ethical, skilled users of GenAI, ready for work and life in an AI-enabled world.

https://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations-policies/policies/using-gen-ai-during-your-studies

How?

- Integrate considerations of generative AI throughout programme and assessment design
- Build considerations of generative AI into our processes and practices
- Co-design guidance for students with students
- Develop training and support for staff and students
- Redesign of assessment and AI use if authorised and explained clearly

= support and empower not replace



Approach at UoS - AI Fluency: guiding principles

Responsible AI is driven by:

- Proactive, institution-wide approach aligned to triple helix and coordinated through AI@Southampton
- Theme of empowerment, agency, human-centred
- Collaboration, co-creation
- Transparency
- Continuous learning and experimentation
- Criticality and creativity
- Flexibility and adaptation (we acknowledge that one size won't fit all disciplines)

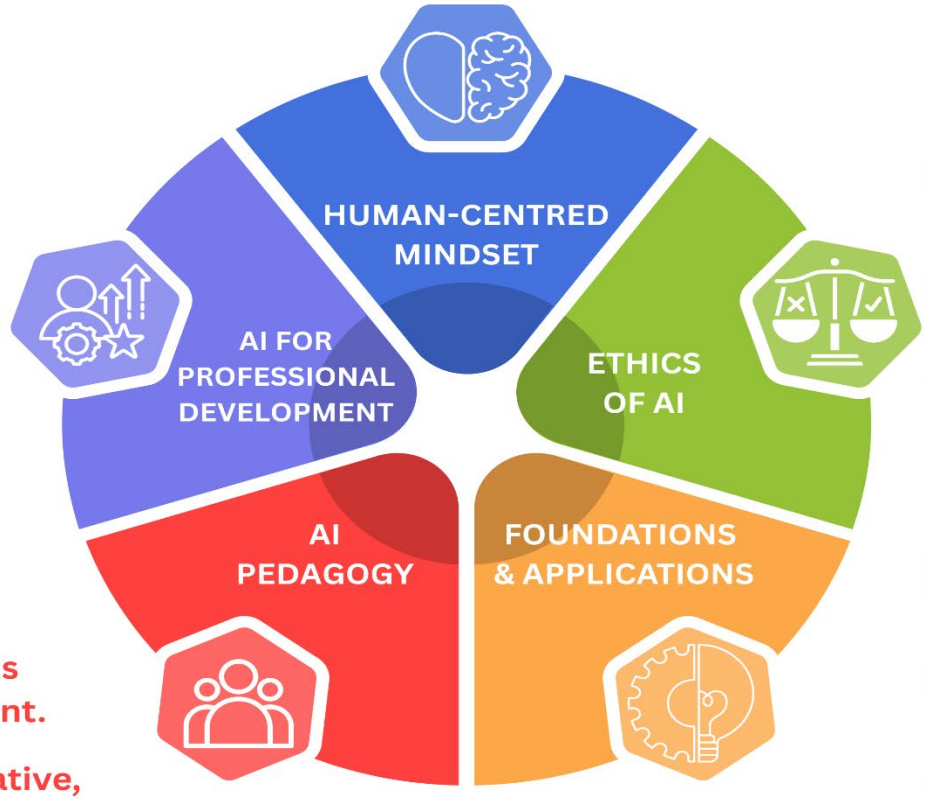
AI COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS

GUIDING TEACHERS ON AI USE AND MISUSE IN EDUCATION

I understand that AI is human-led and impacts human rights & agency.

I ensure AI supports & never replaces human judgment in education.

I advocate for inclusive, ethical & just uses of AI in education.



I use AI to reflect on & personalize my own professional learning.

I use AI to support peer learning & share insights with others.

I design AI tools & strategies to shape meaningful teacher growth.

I recognize core AI ethics like fairness, inclusion & sustainability.

I follow ethical & legal guidelines when using AI tools & data.

I co-create AI ethics through advocacy, feedback & collaboration.

I can spot where AI supports my teaching & assess basic risks.

I integrate AI into learning that builds student voice, empathy & engagement.

I lead AI-infused learning that is creative, student-driven & future-ready.

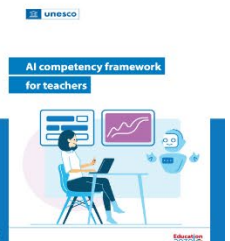
I know how AI works & can identify appropriate tools for teaching.

I use AI tools with skill, awareness of bias & relevance to my context.

I design or adapt AI tools to meet learning needs & local challenges.

ACQUIRE DEEPEN CREATE

Adapted from ***UNESCO's AI COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS (2024***
Poster by Stephen Taylor (@sjtylr).
Source: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391104



AI COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS

PREPARING STUDENTS TO BE RESPONSIBLE AND CREATIVE CITIZENS IN THE ERA OF AI

I recognize AI is created by people and affects human lives.

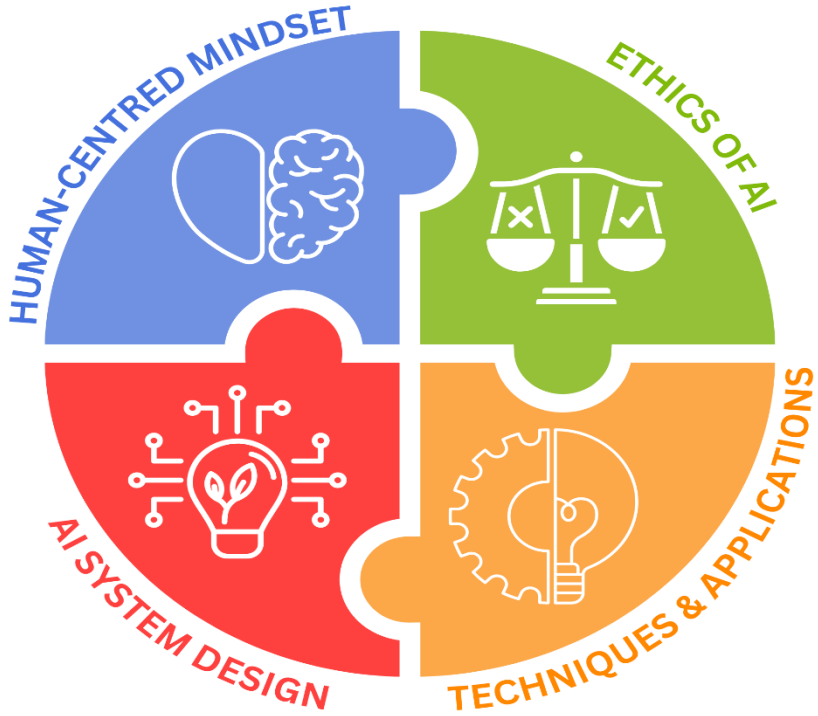
I take responsibility for how I use AI and who it impacts.

I shape the future of AI with empathy, curiosity & social purpose.

I can define a problem for AI and know what it takes to build a useful system.

I can plan, design, and build simple AI systems that reflect ethical and technical thinking.

I improve and evaluate AI systems based on testing, feedback, and impact on people and society.



UNDERSTAND APPLY CREATE

I know AI can raise issues of fairness, bias, and rights.

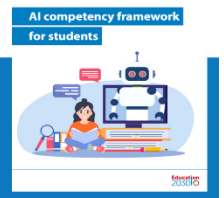
I make sure I use AI safely, ethically, and fairly.

I design or evaluate AI to be ethical from the start, including all voices.

I understand how AI uses data and algorithms

I can build or use AI tools thoughtfully and critically.

I create or improve AI tools with real-world impact and ethical awareness.



*Adapted from **UNESCO's AI COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS (2024***
Poster by Stephen Taylor (@sjtylr).
***Source:** https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/ai-future-learning/guidance*

Cyborg, centaur or just me?

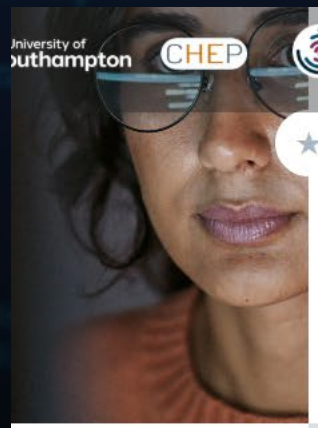
Centaur: "*centaur work has a clear line between person and machine*" (p. 136) – clear division of labour between AI and human

Cyborg: "*cyborgs blend machine and person, integrating the two deeply. Cyborgs don't just delegate tasks, they intertwine efforts with AI*" (p.137)

(Mollick, 2024)

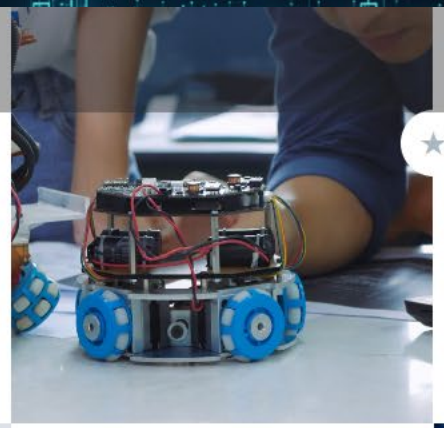
Just me: consciously choosing NOT to use AI for some tasks

University of Southampton



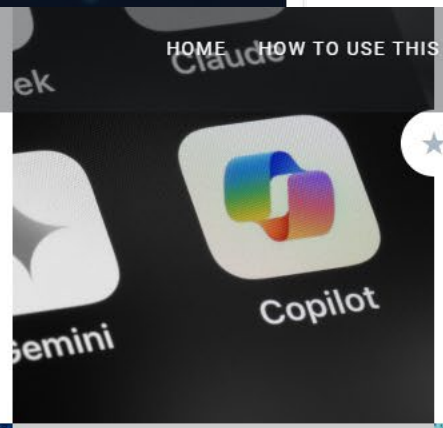
use GenAI responsibly in education at UoS?

Using GenAI responsibly in education practice



students using GenAI at UoS?

A deep dive into how UoS students use GenAI



getting started with GenAI for education a UoS

What is Copilot? Why use

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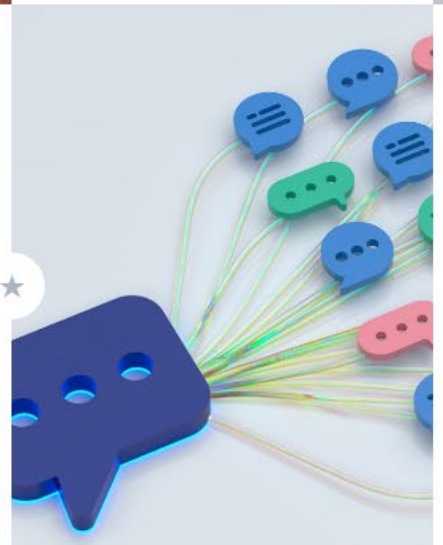

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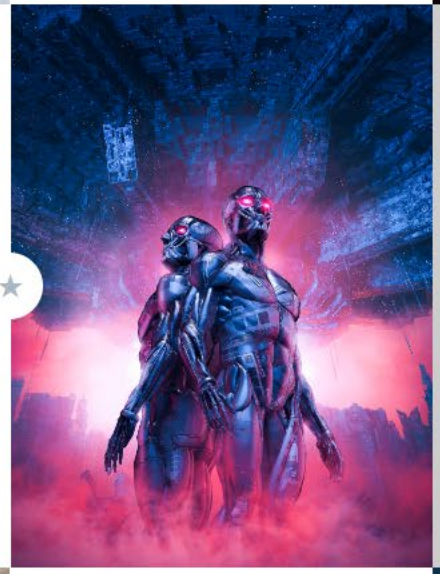
Cyborgs, centaurs or just me: ways of working with GenAI

Are you a centaur, cyborg or just you?



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Uncovering dataset limitations and baked-in bias

How can we work with AI to get appropriate and useful content?

EDIT

Impact of GenAI on

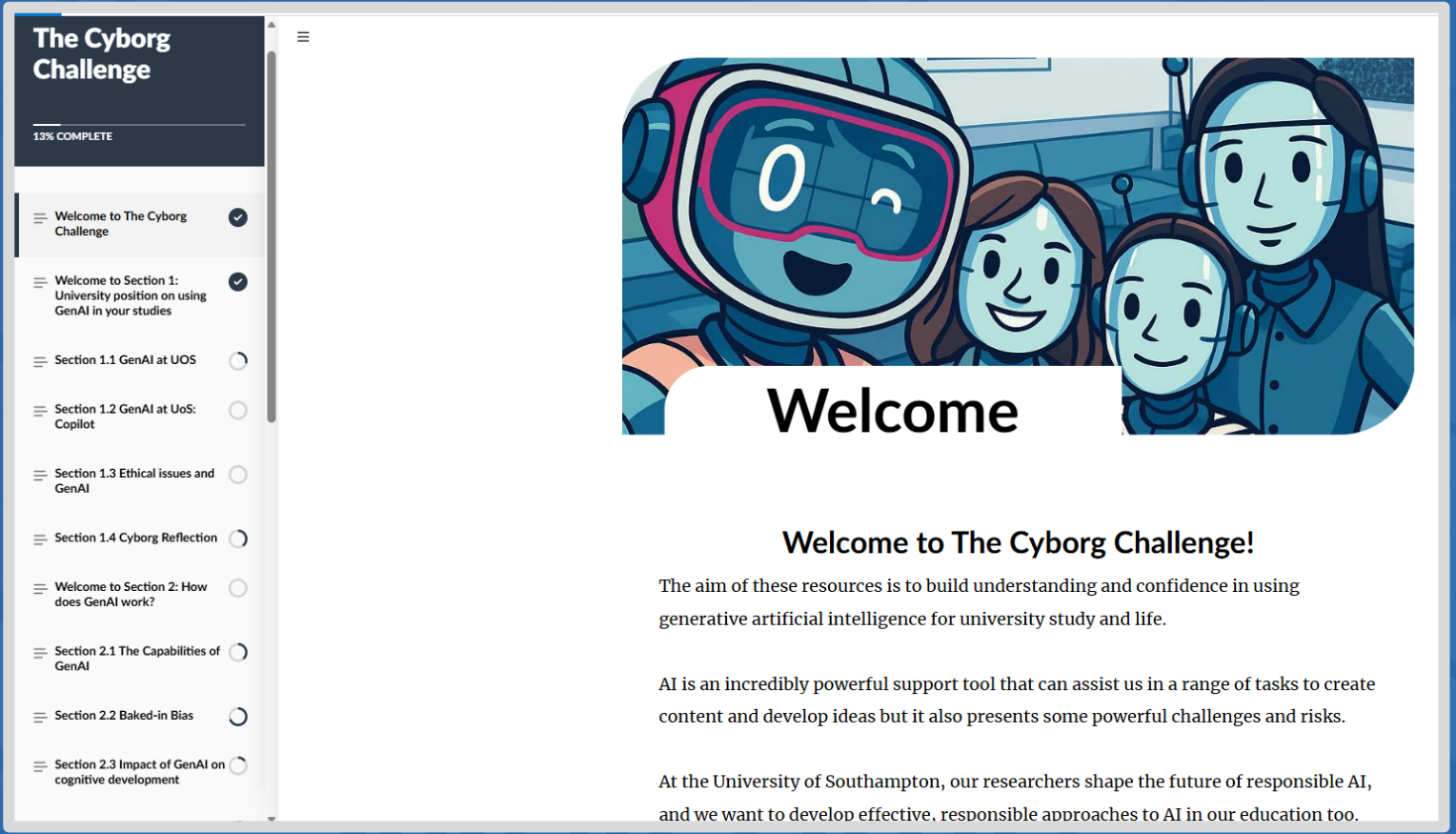
EDIT

Doctoral supervisors:

EDIT

The clarification

The Cyborg Challenge



Aim:

“To build understanding and confidence in using GenAi.”

Topics:

-University position on AI
-How does AI work?
-How to talk to AI
-Ethical issues
-Creativity with Ai

Includes AI-edited graphics this is the creative team.

The Cyborg Challenge

‘Cyborg/Centaur/ just me’ conception to encourage reflection and agency. (Mollick, 2024)

A **‘centaur’ approach** that sees us use AI for specific tasks. It notes a clear division of labour between you (the human) and AI. A centaur is a mythical half human – half horse creature (centaur) where the torso is human and the body is horse and there is a distinction between the parts.

Prof. Ethan Mollick (Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, USA)

A **‘cyborg’ approach** that weaves GenAI into how we conceive and think about tasks. It sees us blending and integrating GenAI into how we work/study. A cyborg is a fictional entity that comprises human and machine parts working in integration with each other.

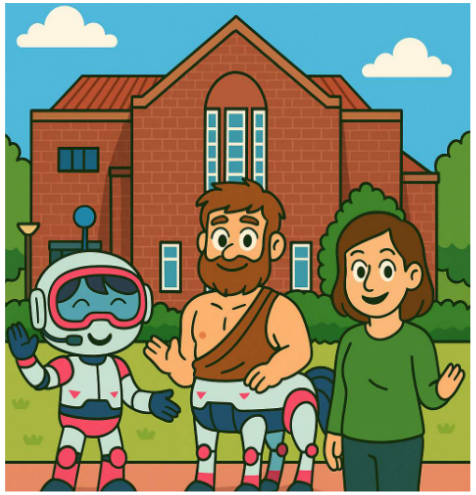
Prof Ethan Mollick (Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, USA)

ⓘ We can also add ‘just me’ into this idea **‘Just Me’.**

Lesson 1 - Welcome to The Cyborg Challenge

University position on using GenAI

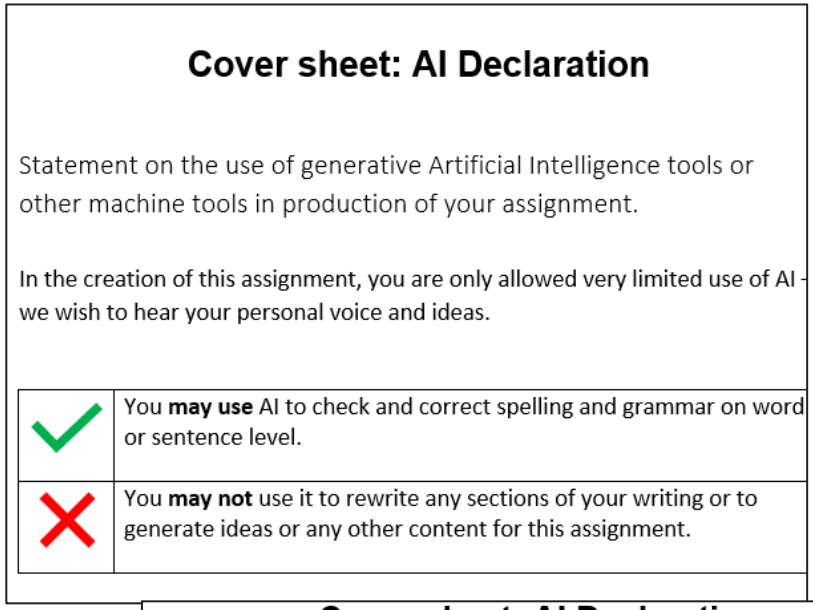
Welcome



At the University of Southampton, we are keen to learn about GenAI and understand how it will support our lives and work. We understand the importance of criticality and digital knowledge skills in helping us work successfully with AI.
In this section, you will learn about the UoS position on using GenAI in your studies, which GenAI tool the University supports and consider some ethical questions related to GenAI.

What could that look like in practice?

- **Transparency**, openness – how will we use AI? For what purpose?
- Discussion from day one – understand the levels of knowledge and skill in the room
- Honesty – expectation of all
- Clear guidelines on 'declaring use': How should we declare the use of AI in our learning/teaching?
- Embedding of AI in tasks, discussions and role-modelling use

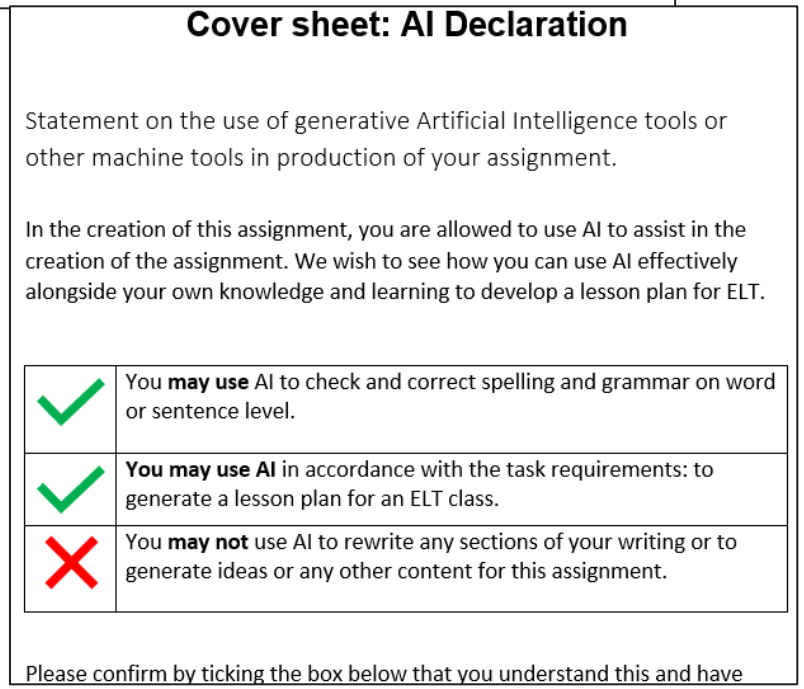


Cover sheet: AI Declaration

Statement on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence tools or other machine tools in production of your assignment.

In the creation of this assignment, you are only allowed very limited use of AI - we wish to hear your personal voice and ideas.

✓	You **may use** AI to check and correct spelling and grammar on word or sentence level.
✗	You **may not** use it to rewrite any sections of your writing or to generate ideas or any other content for this assignment.



Cover sheet: AI Declaration

Statement on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence tools or other machine tools in production of your assignment.

In the creation of this assignment, you are allowed to use AI to assist in the creation of the assignment. We wish to see how you can use AI effectively alongside your own knowledge and learning to develop a lesson plan for ELT.

✓	You **may use** AI to check and correct spelling and grammar on word or sentence level.
✓	**You may use AI** in accordance with the task requirements: to generate a lesson plan for an ELT class.
✗	You **may not** use AI to rewrite any sections of your writing or to generate ideas or any other content for this assignment.

Please confirm by ticking the box below that you understand this and have

Criticality and understanding

Surfacing:

- dataset limitations (*create an image of a watch showing 3.25pm*)
- limited perspectives (*create an image of…)* – need to work hard to get the right thing
- Willingness to please
- 100% confidence in false information (*write a biography of X, Vice-chancellor of X*)

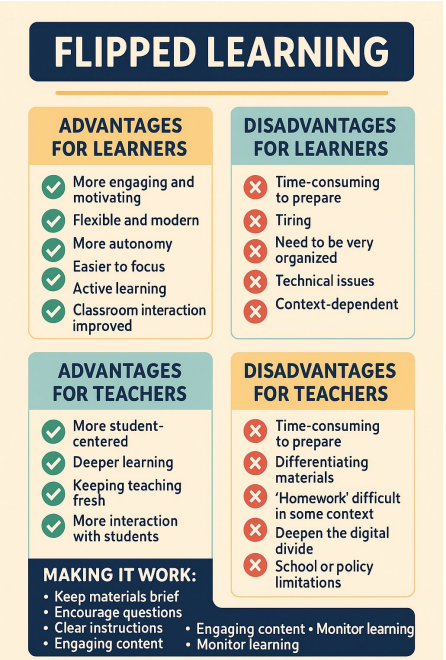
Creativity and experimentation

A Shakespearean Speech on the Virtues and Vexations of Flipped Learning

Spoken by a wise Educator, addressing fellow scholars in a grand hall of learning.

O list, ye minds who in this modern age
Do seek to teach where once we only learned.
Behold a method, *flipped* in name and frame,
That turns the glass and makes the pupil sage.

No more the scholar slumps with heavy head,
Whilst droning voice doth echo from the wall.
Now doth the student, in his private stead,
Engage the muse e'en 'fore he enters hall.



5. On Making It Work:

To flip with finesse and not flop,
Keep videos short—make them pop!
Give clear-cut commands,
Review learning plans,
And be there to guide, not just prop.

Flippy the Owl and the Upside-Down School

Once upon a time in a bright, busy forest, there was a wise little owl named Flippy. But Flippy was *not* your usual owl—he did things *upside-down*!

He read books before class started.
He watched lessons at home.
And when he went to school with the other young animals, he asked loads of questions and shared lots of ideas.

"Why don't we all learn this way?" chirped Flippy. "It's more fun and I remember things better!"

The other animals were curious.

Benny the Bear said, "But I like naps in class!"

Creativity

- Creating multimodal, personalised resources (teacher)
- Creating linguistic content, individually or collaboratively (students)
- Critiquing resources and practice

Final assessment

- Reflection on engagement with module content (part 1)
- Create a blended English lesson plan (part 2)
- Plan the context and the underpinning ethos (theories) – what they aim to achieve
- Ask the AI (prompt the AI) – work with it to get a final plan – explain how you did this and what you changed/liked/didn't like
- Critique the final plan referring to theory/literature/good practice
- Include prompts and plans in an appendix

Outcomes:

- Brought together AI literacy practices, reflection, criticality, creativity
- Authentic task
- Learning by doing assessment task

The ‘new game’: augmentation, empowerment, confidence

- **Embrace** – learn about AI, be creative, find the creative enjoyment in using it yourself (ignore the ‘noise’)
- **Integrate/embed** – find ways to use it to support teaching and learning e.g. creating resources, getting students to create resources, doing the admin jobs you don’t like; have fun; co-create
- **Contextualise** – use AI in the way that makes sense to you, in your context, for your learners; be critical about its value in language education
- **Trust** – to your expertise as a linguist, intercultural expert and educator – build in AI literacy from that foundation
- **Remember** the human – build your confidence to build that of your students

Thank you!

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