

Generating AI Alternatives: collaborating and creating intersections

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Intended audience

This workshop is for those looking for alternative ways of engaging with the debates, problems and speculations about generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education. No special knowledge is required, just a willingness to collaborate, create and be curious.

Workshop description

May 2024 finds us eighteen months on since the release into the wild of unregulated generative AI models and their chatbot front-ends. While Higher Education (HE) has been playing catch-up in terms of policy and regulation (e.g. [Russell Group 2023](#), [Conrad 2023](#), [EU 2022](#)), those who work in higher education have been grappling with the consequences for learning, teaching, assessment, and research on the ground. Between the hype from big tech on the one hand, and a sense of despair on the other, alternative, critical and ethical activities have begun to emerge (Bender et al., 2021; Bozkurt, A. et al., 2023; Conrad, 2023; Fischer et al., 2023; Nerantzi et al., 2023; Rahm, 2023). This workshop explores these alternatives both as concept and method.

The new computational approaches – so far confined to the largest and most capital-intensive tech companies – can generate human-like content at an unprecedented speed and scale. As an alternative, we will produce knowledge at a human speed and scale, through creative collaborations in a range of media, including generated, ‘made’ and found contents. Using the definition of networked learning as an activity of relational trust through “convivial technologies” (Dohn et al., 2023), our goal is not only to understand and critique computational generativity, but to reconnect with ‘generation’ as a curious, expansive and generous practice in education.

The workshop is a collective make-athon, where participants will respond creatively to provocations with, against and around generative AI. Making materials will be provided in place and online, and participants will also be encouraged to find and generate their own. This will help participants to reflect collectively and respond critically to the emerging ethical, epistemological and relational challenges of generative AI.

Participants will be provided with 5-minute multi-modal provocations from the four facilitators on the topic of generativity in education. Topics from our own research and practices will inform the provocations, including:

- Social justice and rights-based challenges with generative AI
- Generative AI platform capitalism and labour in HE
- Feminist pedagogies and generative AI in HE
- Resistance to generative AI in HE
- Open education practices and generative AI

As facilitators of this workshop, we acknowledge our own positionalities, values and perspectives, and we encourage participants to respond from their own. We look forward to creating together a rich tapestry of multiple understandings on this complex topic.

Participant engagement

This workshop will be run simultaneously face-to-face and online, so participants who are unable to attend the conference can still participate in real-time. We aim to provide an embodied, co-located space that is rich in material resources, alongside and in dialogue with online/networked spaces, and with digital and synthetic

(generative) materials. These different speeds, modes and energies of production may not integrate smoothly, and how participants manage these mediations will be reflected upon as part of the workshop process. Four experienced facilitators, two in person and two online, will work with participants to create an energising and supportive space, where ideas can flow and expression can take different forms.

Participant outcomes

- Engage in creative responses to current debates in generative AI in education.
- Contribute to one or two shared artefacts that will persist beyond the workshop (in forms to be decided at the event)
- Discuss and reflect on the experience with other educators and practitioners
- Optionally participate in a collaborative research process, where these artefacts form part of a work for publication and/or further dissemination

Workshop alignment with conference themes

This workshop is a response to developing understandings of how 'networked learning' is underpinned by a commitment to equity and social justice, specifically answering Networked Learning Editorial Collective's call for "collaborative engagement in valued activity" which is a "joint action in the face of shared challenges" (2021, p. 314). The activities will allow for active and collaborative participation in these shared principles of networked learning. The workshop speaks directly to the theme 'Artificial intelligence, learning analytics and emergent technologies'. It also touches on the themes 'Ethical and responsible innovation and research' and 'Spaces, places and modalities for networked learning'.

Workshop process/activities

The workshop will be structured in four parts:

1. Introduction and instructions (10 minutes)
2. Provocations 1 and 2 and responses (30 minutes)
3. Provocations 3 and 4 and responses (30 minutes)
4. Plenary reflection and sharing (20 minutes)

In part 1 of the workshop, the facilitators will provide a brief introduction and instructions.

In parts 2 and 3, two of the facilitators will offer a five-minute 'provocation' on the generative theme: these will also be made available in advance. Participants can choose which provocations they wish to respond to, and will move to allocated spaces in the room or online to work. Options for working alone or in smaller groups will be available. Participants will have access to physical materials - paper, card, pens, recycled scraps - and a variety of digital media. They will be invited to write, draw, synthesise or assemble materials as they think through their responses, and to accept or refuse the invitation of generative AI. The provocations themselves will provide examples of diversely generated media. Between parts 2 and 3, participants may choose to move groups, begin a new project, or continue their response, perhaps bringing in new ideas and materials.

The final plenary (part 4) will give an opportunity for participants to reflect on the process and how it has influenced their thinking and future practice. The session will end with an invitation to share digital versions of the artefacts created and contribute to a collaborative meta-artefact, which may be made available as an open resource or publication where contributors may be cited as authors.*

*Informed consent will be sought from participants and ethical approval will be obtained from the lead author's institutional research ethics committee in advance. Participants may still participate in the workshop without submitting their artefact to the final meta-artefact, and participants may withdraw their consent at any point up until submission to the meta-artefact.

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