

Institutional readiness for the future of education

Matt Cornock

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Abstract

Educational institutions are needing to re-establish their place in the lifelong learning journey of their students, within an external context that is increasingly disruptive and requiring greater agility (Bean, 2025). Professional accreditation, easy-to-access credentials offered by 'big tech', and the reconceptualisation of knowledge in the generative-AI age, are forces that demand innovation in educational ecosystems. Digital education professionals have a key role to play to inform and influence authentic learning environments and learning experiences that align with lifelong learning outcomes.

The wider employment context has led to recent assertions of an overqualified labour market (Pantea, 2025). However, the transition to a "post-knowledge economy" (Xie & Avila, 2025) driven by generative-AI, but also wider factors that demand greater interdisciplinarity and a high proportion of the workforce requiring reskilling (WEF, 2025), lead to a shift in educational expectations. Higher education institutions, for example, need to complement, not compete with the broader educational provision in order to remain relevant to the needs of employers and students, including bringing a focus on "skills-first" curricula (Bean, 2025). Skills developed during formal education, such as critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving, resilience and leadership are in high demand (WEF, 2025). If students' employment futures are increasingly uncertain, then education providers need to support beyond subject knowledge afforded to students in formalised study and to enable learners to develop, apply and articulate their skills across careers.

This workshop aims to bring together the "collective intelligence" (Leimeister, 2010) of the ALT community to identify how educational technologies, digital learning design and professional expertise combine to develop educational experiences that meet the needs of learners in the post-knowledge economy. Participants will challenge established models of knowledge dissemination and social learning within constructed institutional spaces, to consider how "enduring human capabilities" (Hagel, et al., 2019) can be truly fostered by learners with creative use of educational technology and digital education. Examples from the University of Leeds will be provided, including portfolio and platform management, learning design for repurpose and alignment of institutional strategy. The intended outcome of this workshop is to enable participants to prompt a re-evaluation of institutional systems and team expertise that support teaching and learning approaches to focus on human skills over knowledge.

Whilst the context for this session refers to higher education, the key lens to view this debate is of a wide angle that encapsulates all forms of formal and informal education and learning.

References

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