
How can we co-design learning with our students?

Webinar handout

by Joshua Underwood

Why co-design for learning with AI?

Teachers and students need to negotiate a shared understanding of opportunities and of challenges and risks when using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning. Participatory approaches, using emerging frameworks, can facilitate this by engaging learners and teachers together in imagining, designing, and critically evaluating AI learning futures.

What is co-design?

Designers, like teachers, aim to understand users' or learners' needs, motivations, and perspectives. We combine this 'user-centered' understanding with our expertise and beliefs about learning to create appropriate, effective, and even delightful experiences. Co-design uses participatory approaches to move from designing "for" to designing "with". Responsibility and decision-making can be shared throughout the process. For example, learners might negotiate intended outcomes and/or help identify topics of interest or resources and how to use these. For more, see: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/participatory-design>

What are the benefits for learners and teachers?

Participatory approaches can increase engagement and help ensure learning designs are appropriate and "meaningful" (Frauenberger, Rogers, Quintana, 2017). They can help teachers and learners develop understanding and activities together (Pinter, Mathew, Smith, 2016), generate creative solutions to challenges, and support autonomy (Kuchah & Smith, 2011).

How can we facilitate participatory design?

1. **Create conditions for participation** – Share objectives, negotiate success criteria, discuss how to help one another achieve these: What can I (the teacher) do? What can you do for yourself? What can we do for others? For more ideas, see Kubanyiova (2018).

-
2. **Share beliefs about learning, identify challenges** – What do we think are the important things students need to do to learn well? Why? Which of these do we find hard? Why?
 3. **Develop shared understanding** – What can AI do? Research, share, and reflect – for examples see www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/integrating-ict/articles/generative-ai-and-language-classroom . Develop a shared list of potential uses.
 4. **Explore opportunities** – Challenge students: How might we use AI to help us do the things we think are important and challenging for learning and achieve our objectives? Use ideation techniques to support creativity – see www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/ideation for examples. ‘Pitch’, compare, evaluate, and refine one another’s ideas.
 5. **Use speculative futures** – Create and share stories to explore possibilities, challenges, make ideas more concrete and accessible to others, and learn from responses.
 6. **Reflect** – For example, use scenarios (e.g. www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-secondary/lesson-plans/advanced-c1/ai-and-ethics-education) to illustrate uses and ethical AI guidance frameworks (e.g. Holmes & Miao, 2023) to develop questions to promote critical thinking about possible risks and benefits: What is gained? What might be lost? Who benefits? Who might lose out? Etc.

References

Frauenberger, C., Rogers, Y., & Quintana, C. (2017). Conversation: Tensions and Possibilities between Learning and Participatory Design. In *Participatory Design for Learning-Perspectives from Practice and Research* (pp. 225-235). London: Routledge.

Holmes, W., & Miao, F. (2023). *Guidance for generative AI in education and research*.

UNESCO Publishing. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidance-generative-ai-education-and-research>

Kubanyiova, M. (2018). Creating a Safe Speaking Environment. Part of the Cambridge Papers in ELT series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

www.cambridge.org/us/files/7215/7488/5502/CambridgePapersInELT_SafeSpeaking_2018_ONLINE.pdf

Kuchah, K., & Smith, R. (2011). Pedagogy of autonomy for difficult circumstances: From practice to principles. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 119-140.

Pinter, A., Mathew, R., & Smith, R. (2016). Children and teachers as co-researchers in Indian primary English classrooms. *British Council - ELT Research papers*, 16(03).

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books/children-and-teachers-co-researchers-handbook-activities

A recording of Josh’s webinar can be watched here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/ai-learning-mini-event>