

AI & Authentic Assessment in a Digital Era

CONFERENCE PACK

July 2026

Session 10

Consultancy Learning in an AI-Integrated World: Designing for Professional Practice

[Watch the session](#) | [View the session slides](#)

Do your students ever make comparisons between employer attitudes to AI and HE attitudes?

What students encounter through the consultancy projects can run counter to their expectations.

Some of the organisations they work with, particularly SMEs, are considerably earlier in their AI adoption journey than the students assume. This can prove pedagogically valuable as the development of AI policy, data governance and safety measures becomes a genuine point of conversation.

Having said that, for the larger organisations who have extensive AI policies in place we are often using information which is in the public domain and therefore not sensitive to gain an in-depth understanding of operations, the focus is therefore on using resources effectively and not the client policy or approach.

Do the students ever raise questions about the costs or economics of AI? A big issue now for many organisations but can be ignored by education?

Students do raise economic concerns, though typically framed at a societal rather than organisational level. The most common themes are anxiety about AI displacing jobs and occasionally, the environmental costs associated with AI use. Both concerns are legitimate, and we have built them into the module's approach.

This is why we place deliberate emphasis on efficiency of use, ie students are encouraged to treat AI as a resource to be deployed selectively, outsourcing tasks to it where it adds genuine value rather than defaulting to it for everything.

This framing addresses the environmental concern directly, by discouraging indiscriminate use, and speaks to the employment concern by reinforcing that professional value lies in judgement about when and how to use AI.

The broader premise of the question, the organisational economics of AI, such as return on investment, is an area education could engage with more explicitly, and it is something we do elsewhere on the programme.

Session 10

Consultancy Learning in an AI-Integrated World: Designing for Professional Practice

[Watch the session](#) | [View the session slides](#)

Would free AI versions of AI only, hold them back in the output they could achieve?

Because we deliberately shifted the assessment weight away from artefacts and towards the need for client interaction the difference between free and premium tools matters less.

A better model can generate a more polished output, but the human work of framing, interpreting and communicating is a core part of the assessment, and free tiers are perfectly adequate as a scaffold for that.

There are genuine functional gaps such as usage caps, but we design tasks so that success doesn't hinge on frontier-model capability; and we teach tool selection as a professional skill in itself (knowing what a free tool can and can't do). The students often work collaboratively, so they can share usage across different chats.



Keep in touch

Dr Catherine Hine
Lecturer in Leadership
University of Plymouth

[Connect on LinkedIn](#)
[Keep in touch via email](#)