



Navigating the AI-Driven landscape: Six Key Skills for L&D Professionals.

Six new and evolving skills needed for Learning and Development and Talent Development professionals using Generative AI:

A leading L&D Recruiters perspective.

blue eskimo



Navigating the AI-Driven landscape: Future Skills for L&D Professionals

Introduction

The Learning and Development (L&D) and Talent Development landscape is rapidly evolving, driven by the advent of generative AI. This paper explores the potential transformative impact of AI on L&D roles and specifically the new and evolving skills needed for Learning and Development, Organisation Development and Talent Development professionals.

This paper serves as a guide for L&D professionals looking to understand and harness the capabilities of generative AI, and as the technology evolves the paper will be added to.

We hope you enjoy it,

Nick Jones,
Director

blue eskimo

The current L&D Landscape

In our [2024 work and salary report](#) we recognised that we are living in uncertain times. The economy in Learning and Development and Learning Technology mirrors the wider economic slowdown. With budgets tighter, projects slowing and the after effect of huge hiring and digital learning projects in 2021 and 2022, we now have a new challenge, to capitalise on the potential of Generative AI in L&D.

We can trace the evolution from traditional training to digital learning over many years, this has been widely reported on and is manifested in the way in which learning can be accessed and the mediums in which learning can be delivered.

The Covid 19 pandemic accelerated the demand for digital learning and Virtual Instructor Led interventions, driven by unprecedented workforce changes. Fully remote and hybrid working practices became the norm, daily access to collaborative technologies and video conferencing changed the way we work and immediate access to digital learning delivered through increasingly engaging mediums such as Learning Experience Platforms (LXP) made learning in the flow of work ever easier.

As specialist recruiters in the Learning and Development arena, Blue Eskimo can attest to the huge rise in demand during 2021, 2022 and early 2023, for digital learning skills (Instructional Design, Learning Experience Design) combined with high demand for the services of learning vendors (both face to face and digital provision).

However, as outlined in our [2024 Work and Salary Report](#), the current L&D landscape is in stark contrast to the previous years, with L&D budgets feeling their biggest pinch since 2016.

We are now moving rapidly into a world where the power of Generative AI is clear and the applications in Learning and Development are wide and significant.

As leading Recruiters for over 20 years in the Learning and Development industry it is critical for us to research and understand future skills demand in our industry. The following is an attempt to articulate the predicted demand as we see it.

SIX Core Skills for L&D Professionals in the AI enhanced world.

Dr Terri Horton work futurist, talks about the future of L&D professionals and the applications of generative AI in L&D in her LinkedIn Learning courses. There are over 250 courses on AI on LinkedIn learning alone (March 2024) and Gartner predicts that by 2025, "GenAI will be a workforce partner for 90% of companies worldwide"

Dr Terri Horton and also Dr Phillipa Hardman a thought leader in AI Learning Design, have mapped the uses of Generative AI to the ADDIE design model and provide thorough detail and thought leadership when looking in depth at the applications of Gen AI in learning design. We would highly recommend following and reviewing their respective work for detailed analysis.

As Learning and Development (L&D) professionals, the advent of generative AI in the workplace is not just an evolution but potentially a revolution in how we approach our roles. Here's our take on how your skills as learning professionals may need to evolve:

Learn More

Dr Terri Horton -
Work Futurist, LinkedIn Learning
course presenter and author.

Website

Dr Phillipa Hardman
LinkedIn Top Voice AI + Learning
Design, Academic, Researcher
and creator of DOMS AI Learning design
engine

Substack

AI Literacy – Understanding AI Concepts

Generative AI may well have the power to transform the L&D landscape, making it essential for professionals to understand AI concepts. We are all becoming familiar with Chat GPT, Gemini or CoPilot, but do we understand the concepts behind the interfaces?

This could include more detailed knowledge of machine learning or natural language processing, or it may be simply keeping up to date with the fast paced application and integration of generative AI within existing learning technology stacks,. For example Authoring Tools such as Articulate (AI) , AI course generators integrated with Learning Experience Platforms (LXP) , AI Storyboard Generators , AI Script Generators, AI powered design feedback and how AI can be used to create personalised learning experiences such as Adaptive Learning or content intelligence tools.

We need to understand how AI can interpret enormous amounts of data and the power this provides in analysis and feedback. As AI becomes more integrated into L&D, professionals who can understand how to use these technologies, and how they can be applied will add great value.

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There is a wealth of resources available in LinkedIn Learning, YouTube and Google Cloud to start.

Blue Eskimo will aim to keep Learning professionals aware of new insights and recommendations throughout 2024.

Prompt Engineering: The art of AI Communication

The ability to communicate effectively with AI through prompt engineering is becoming a crucial skill. This involves crafting detailed prompts that guide the AI to produce the desired learning content. In other words asking the right questions to get the output that you want.

L&D professionals skilled in prompt engineering will be able to create more targeted and effective learning materials, making this a key area for skill development.

Prompt engineering in the context of generative AI can be complex, as it requires a deep understanding of both the AI model and the specific task at hand. It involves crafting inputs (prompts) that guide the AI model to produce the desired outputs.

Different AI models have different capabilities and limitations, understanding these nuances is potentially crucial. The complexity of the task itself also plays a role. Simple tasks might require straightforward prompts, while complex tasks might require much more intricate prompts.

Prompt engineering is often an iterative process. It involves testing different prompts, analysing the results, and refining the prompts based on those results.

As for training, it would certainly be beneficial for all potential users of Gen AI - so probably all of us!

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The field of Gen AI is rapidly evolving, so continuous learning and staying updated with the latest research and techniques is also important.

Prompt Engineering courses are available on LinkedIn, YouTube and most digital course libraries such as Coursera or Udemy and therefore upskilling is within all of our reach.

Editing, Multimedia and Quality Assurance – the human touch

Editing, Multimedia skills and Quality Assurance of AI-generated content requires a human touch to ensure quality and relevance.

It is nice to think that the power of Gen AI tools removes a layer of human time (and it probably does), however L&D professionals particularly when designing content and content strategy, will need to hone their editing and media skills to refine AI outputs, to ensure that they meet learning objectives and are pedagogically sound.

The benefit of the speed at which text to audio, text to video or text to image content can be generated could very easily be eroded if the quality is not ensured.

These skills will need to be enhanced to take advantage of the amazing additional creative tools that are already becoming available in many of the daily tools we all use.

They will also be needed to erode the potential biases, copyright and IP challenges that Generative AI use poses.

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The multitude of AI and AI enhanced applications in multimedia and publishing tools that already exist and are "imminent" will present an upskilling challenge of its own. The human touch will be more important than ever to validate and ensure quality is not eroded by the creative boost that these enhancements offer.

"Human expertise is irreplaceable – IDs and LXDs must have traditional understanding of pedagogical principles, learning theory and instructional strategy" **MS Copilot**

Phew.....

Data Literacy: Interpreting and Leveraging data Insights

Gen AI systems can generate vast amounts of data and consequently L&D professionals will need to become increasingly data literate to take advantage. This means being able to interpret and use data to inform learning strategies, understand learner behaviours, and measure the effectiveness of learning interventions.

Data literacy will be essential for making informed decisions and perfecting learning outcomes.

Generative AI can assist in data collection by using the large language model (LLM) to categorise (for example) external industry classifications.

It can help us cleanse and tag data, making data engineering more efficient to an informed user. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT can even create software code to build analytic models although development skills beyond most of us may be useful at this level!

Generative AI can help us to contextualise data, it can provide insights quickly that have obvious applications for L&D – such as learner feedback and decision making.

Generative AI can analyse data from various formats. You can provide data in CSV format, MS Excel files, including numerical data, text, and formulas. If your data is stored in a database (e.g., SQL databases), you can query the data and provide the results to the generative AI.

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Generative AI can analyse unstructured text, such as articles, reports, social media posts, or customer reviews, plain text or PDF.

The effectiveness of Generative AI depends of course on the quality, quantity, and relevance of the data provided and obviously, the limitations of the user!

Personalisation Design Strategies: AI enhanced Precision Learning

Generative AI can help us level the playing field in terms of the application of learning strategies.

Utilising the wealth of data available on learner profiles we can create personalised learning paths harnessing AI. This could include understanding the learner's knowledge base, learning style and preferences, using AI to interpret the data.

Incorporating immediate feedback we can develop a system that can quickly harness feedback and pivot the design accordingly and at speed, using Gen AI enhanced learning design tools. Allowing for continuous improvement of the learning experience based on real-time feedback from learners.

AI power can help you interpret the data and also speed up the ability to generate more appropriate assets based on data. The efficiencies in the speed of the production and changes to learning assets can assist in creating Just-in-time learning, Micro Learning and also personalisation.

Adaptive Learning where we can create learning paths based on individual learner profiles and progress could become the norm, as content becomes more dynamic and feedback data is incorporated and analysed using our Generative AI tools.

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Understanding how we can use Generative AI through effective prompt engineering and the interpretation of data, combined with the efficiencies that can be gained in the creative process with AI assisted course creation, slide creation, image creation could assist greatly in creating truly personalised learning experiences.

Consulting – Influencing and advising

L&D professionals often function as consultants, performance consultants or business partners, advising on the best strategies and tools for effective learning, talent development and working on complex people projects such as competency frameworks and career maps.

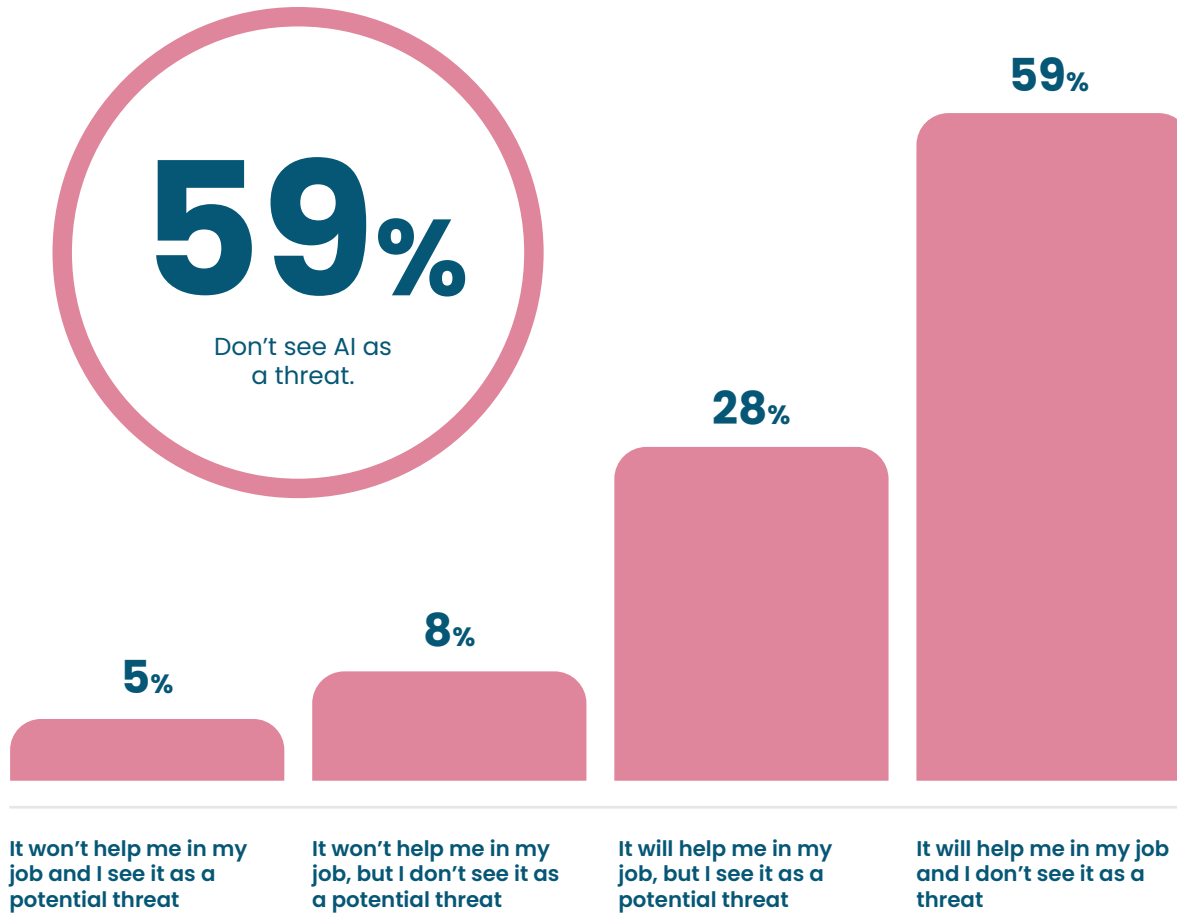
Instructional Designers and Learning Experience Designers have relationships with the subject matter experts. Using Generative AI, this consulting role becomes even more critical. Professionals will need to stay abreast of the latest AI developments and be able to guide organisations and SMEs on how to integrate these technologies into their L&D strategies or outputs effectively.

L&D professionals are also likely to develop new and evolving relationships with technology teams, where their input in the use of AI will become even more valuable. An example of this could be the design and development of AI-driven learning chatbots. The ability of L&D professionals to interpret and harness the technologies, in particular in relation to the data insights, will become more valuable in delivering business results.

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Consulting skills, have consistently been a key requirement of L&D positions over the last years, conceptualising and also influencing, business partnering and selling benefits of learning interventions and potential performance impact is a requirement of the modern L&D function. Generative AI understanding and application will surely be a requirement of this consulting dialogue.

What impact do you think Generative AI will have on your job?



Comments

From our 2024 Work and Salary Survey. The overall sentiment is positive in terms of the impact that AI will have on L&D roles, with 59% of L&D professionals believing that it will help in their jobs and they don't see it as a threat. However, this positive viewpoint is diluted somewhat as 33% of respondents see it as a 'potential threat'.

5%

Do see AI as a threat.

How did we designate the 6 core skills?

The journey to highlighting these core 6 key future skills for L&D with Gen AI is based on the anecdotal input from conversations we have had as recruiters with L&D professionals regularly, combined with the insights provided by thought leaders, futurists and courses detailed in the links on the next page..

Yes the list was also compiled with the input of MS CoPilot, however it is clear that using a Gen AI without the ability to understand the basics of **Prompt Engineering**, or to have an interest in this subject areas without **AI Literacy** or the ability to layer human **editing** would perhaps not have made this as personalised as we hope it is. By developing these skills, L&D professionals can ensure they still are at the forefront of their field, harnessing the power of Generative AI to create impactful and engaging learning experiences.

A search using LinkedIn Recruiter and our own database demonstrates perhaps unsurprisingly the following.

When reviewing skills (either through recommendation) or assessed skills (verified) and based on a large sample group of some 10,000 Learning and development profiles on LinkedIn Recruiter (UK) percentages of L&D professionals with skills matched to Data or Generative AI is as follows.

- **Data and/or Statistical Data Analysis - 10%**
- **Artificial Intelligence or Generative AI - 2%**

We predict that these percentages will increase significantly as the use of Generative AI in L&D evolves, as will the need for new skills as yet undefined..



No need to be rabbits in the headlights

Sources to follow, recommendations and further reading

- **Dr Terri Horton, work futurist and author of "Force Majeure" - Future of work**
Courses:
 - [Generative AI in HR, - LinkedIn Learning](#)
 - [Generative AI in L&D - LinkedIn Learning](#)
- **Google Cloud**
Courses:
 - [Introduction to Generative AI](#)
 - [Responsible AI](#)
- **Microsoft and LinkedIn Learning Certification:**
Courses:
 - [Career Essentials in Generative AI \(Microsoft and LinkedIn\)](#)
- **Jeff Su - <https://www.youtube.com/@JeffSu> - Productivity and use of Gen AI content/prompt engineering**
- **Dr Phillipa Hardman - Top Voice AI + Learning Design**
• <https://drphilippahardman.substack.com/>
- **Marc Zao-Sanders - CEO www.filtered.com Author, AI expert in L&D**
- **Harvard Business Review article <https://hbr.org/2024/03/how-people-are-really-using-genai>**
- **Jon Fletcher - Chief AI Strategist Learning and Performance Institute**
 - <https://explorei.thelpi.org/ai-learning-collective>





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