

**The AI
White Paper**
by IDLance

Intro

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the learning and development landscape, prompting enthusiasm and caution within our industry. Some of us, who shall remain nameless, are a tad worried about an AI apocalypse, but we'll save that for another white paper.

Recently, IDLance Co-Head Honchos **Andrea Dottling and Parker Grant** had the privilege to sit down with guests **Leonard Bullock, Tracy Mendolia-Moore, and Yuna Hur** for a Round Table Talk on all things AI and L&D.

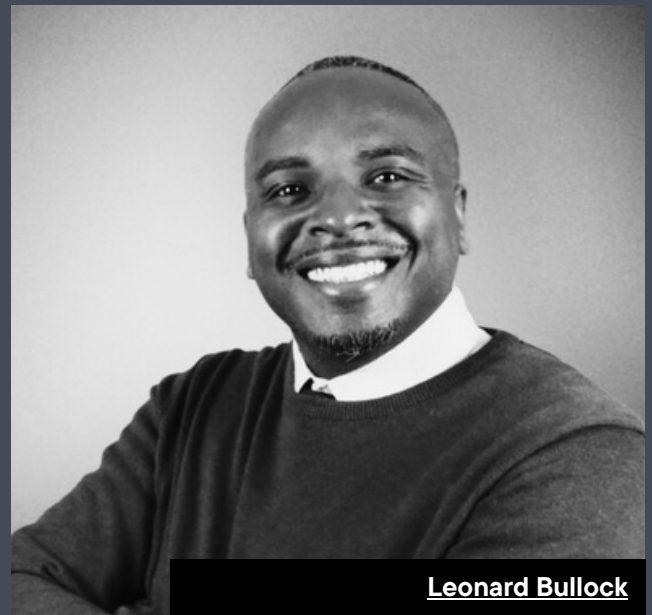
There's no question that **AI is on our minds** right now! (And potentially *inside our minds* also, but again, we'll save that for the next white paper.)

According to a survey that we ran via LinkedIn, **45% of organizations have begun integrating AI into their instructional design processes**, a significant proportion that attests to the growing influence of this technology. Projections for the next five years indicate that **42% of industry professionals anticipate automating between 11-30% of their workflow processes with AI.**

On the other hand, **a quarter of us** are predicting a slightly more conservative approach, expecting to automate just **0-10% of the processes.** Meanwhile, **23% are gunning for a 31-50% automation rate,** while a daring **10% aim to automate more than half of their operations!**

Regarding the potential impact of AI on course creation, **70% of professionals believe that AI will substantially enhance this process!**

Is AI our knight in shining armor or a formidable foe in our quest for better instructional design?



Leonard Bullock



Tracy Mendolia-Moore



Yuna Hur

Five Big Questions

1 *What big challenges or obstacles can we expect to face when implementing AI into our L&D programs?*

We started our conversation with Leonard, Tracy, and Yuna by asking them, “**What keeps you up at night regarding AI implementation in L&D programs?**”

Tracy took a moment to reflect on the whirlwind of information pouring in ever since the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022. “It’s really been a firehose of information, and trying to keep up with it all over the last year has been crazy.” She continued, “Job displacement, upskilling, reskilling, and the radical rethinking of pedagogy are the things that keep me up at night.”

Leonard expressed his concerns, echoing Tracy’s sentiments about the pace of technological change. His own transition from traditional classroom teacher to instructional designer has made him acutely aware of the fear that comes with the advent of each new technological innovation. He emphasized the need to not only keep up with these changes but also to focus on the potential impact on K-12 students. “From my experience in both public and corporate education, I think that business plays a pivotal role in shaping the public school system. There lies an opportunity for us as instructional designers to lead the charge for our classroom teachers when it comes to integrating AI.”

Yuna offered her perspective, addressing the inherent ‘black box’ nature of AI; “I’ve been taught to think about AI as a black box. We have these inputs, we throw them into an algorithm, and then stuff comes out. But what really happens inside this black box? I think that AI is definitely promising and already has shown a lot of exciting impacts, but how can we be more proactive in adopting AI and creating safe guidelines?”

Our Two Cents

To address the concern of accessibility, it is crucial to advocate for open-source AI tools that can be readily **used by educators and learners alike**. Open-source resources democratize the learning process, allowing users with various levels of technological proficiency to leverage AI. Furthermore, **digital literacy programs** should be introduced in school systems to equip students and teachers with the necessary knowledge to navigate these tools effectively. A strong foundation in digital literacy will enhance comprehension and allow for more innovative uses of AI in education.

Regarding the responsible use of AI, it's important to establish **comprehensive ethical guidelines**. We must prioritize transparency, fairness, and privacy. For example, AI algorithms used in education should be regularly audited for potential bias, and data privacy laws should be respected.

Additionally, fostering an ongoing dialogue about the ethical implications of AI can help to encourage **a culture of accountability and awareness**. Especially when it comes to our awareness of what type of army the AI is forming and how we can defeat it when the Robot Reckoning comes in the year 2054. Don't ask how we know that. It's proprietary information.

“One of the things that really concerns me is the possibility of being left behind.”

Leonard Bullock



2 *What emerging AI trends or technologies should we focus on, and how will they impact our field?*

The next question we asked our table guests was, “**What emerging AI trends or technologies in the L&D field are you most excited about, and how do you envision them impacting our field?**”

Leonard expressed his excitement about the large-scale impacts of AI on education. He highlighted the potential for adaptive courseware, backed by AI and fused with gamification, to offer tailored learning experiences that meet individual learner needs. He was especially enthusiastic about the fusion of augmented reality (AR) and AI, which he believes could create interactive and immersive learning experiences! “For a long time, instructional designers thought about gamification in the wrong way. I think that AI can really help with that by offloading scenario creation and everything that goes into developing a scenario.”

Another area he touched on is the potential for AI to influence learning management systems and intelligent content recommendations, with data analytics enhancing the personalization of learning experiences. “I think that with data and analytics in AI, the potential to offer learners more curated experiences and content that really aligns to their interests and learning aptitudes actually becomes a possibility.”

Tracy spoke about the significant reduction in development time for XR and mixed reality environments due to AI and the potential to create personalized scenarios or learning environments. “With XR and mixed realities, the development pipeline on creating custom XR environments and scenarios can take years. With some programs we’re seeing now, like Skybox, and 3D renderings generated using AI, we’re able to take that timeline of development and maximize it and push it forward.”

She's excited about the possibilities of using this AI-enhanced technology to create personalized scenarios and learning environments. "Imagine if you were in elementary or middle school and you could go back in time. You're learning about eighth-grade history and the Declaration of Independence. What if you went back to that time and asked each of our forefathers what they were thinking at that exact moment when they created those documents, thanks to the persona prompts that you can create using AI? She continued, "And what does that mean for learning to what level? We're talking about Bloom's Taxonomy. We've got just that low level of rote memory. If we implement something like this, and we're actually able to create it, you can have a student go from that low-level Bloom to a really high-level Bloom with just this type of interaction."

Yuna focused on the continuous development of generative AI, especially in course creation, and its ability to build empathy with learners. "How can we really build that empathy with our learners and create these scenarios that are really tailored towards specific learner roles? Think of the ways that they can start applying what they've learned through different scenarios, different questions, and different situations that we set up. How can we try to create these environments in which learners can already see themselves applying these things so that when they get to the real application, they'll feel prepared? And hopefully that much more confident and excited because we've already scaffolded that learning with the help of AI."

Our Two Cents

As an agency for freelance instructional designers, we also expect AI technology to have **a massive impact on our community of IDs**. AI technologies can significantly streamline the workflow for freelance instructional designers, **saving time, money, and resources**. Automated curriculum development and content creation tools can handle repetitive tasks, freeing designers to focus on their jobs' more **creative and complex aspects**.

Plus, and somewhat ironically, AI can assist in sorting through the 'fire hose' of information constantly coming at us. **It can filter, categorize, and prioritize data, ensuring that only the most relevant and helpful information rises to the top.**

Another trend we're forecasting is the mobilization of our freelance community to fight against the AI in our name while we chill in a bunker. We're sure they'll be cool with it.

“We're just at the foothills, and we've got a very steep mountain to climb.”

Parker Grant



**“Don’t go for the
band-aid solution.”**

Yuna Hur

3 *How do we begin to integrate and explore AI as novices?*

Next, we asked our Round Table guests, **“What advice would you offer to L&D managers who are just beginning to explore AI in their programs?”**

In our discussion, **Yuna** emphasized the significance of not resorting to 'band-aid' solutions when implementing AI. She advises leaders to take a step back and assess the organization's readiness for AI, engaging with different stakeholders and employees. “AI is very exciting. It's very novel. It's intriguing, and there are so many different applications. But AI isn't gonna solve everything. Take a pause, meet with stakeholders and different groups of employees to really assess the organizational and people change readiness.”

Yuna also stressed the importance of identifying your learning strategies upfront before implementing AI. “What is the why? If we know the purpose and communicate that purpose right from the get-go, we can really get to the 'how' a lot faster. How is this going to happen? And then, 'what' is actually going to happen? That's when you get real nitty gritty and technical and come up with different solutioning.”

Tracy advised newcomers to the AI game to start by creating an account with ChatGPT and familiarizing themselves with its functions and potential outputs. She cautions against blindly accepting AI outputs and emphasizes the importance of reviewing and ensuring that the AI-generated content aligns with learning objectives; “One note of caution is, don't take it for what it is; you still have to read it. You can't just copy and paste it into your learning module. You have to read it. You have to understand it. Make sure that it's meeting the learning objectives, or whatever the prompt is that you're wanting for it.”

That being said, be careful what you share with AI tools like ChatGPT. Tracy warns, “Don't input anything that's FERPA, HIPAA, or student-sensitive. All of the stuff that you're putting into AI software, especially the free versions, is used for the training data of the overall module. So be very cautious about the content that you are putting in because there is a chance that it can find its way into public view.”

Leonard echoed Yuna's advice about not treating AI as a universal fix. He highlighted the importance of approaching AI methodically and investing time in comprehensive research.

“Surround yourself with knowledgeable experts and consult and collaborate. We're just at the beginning of this wave, you know. One thing I think about is how people must have felt when we moved from the prehistoric era into the agricultural era, when all of a sudden, your day-to-day life wasn't consumed with finding food. It gave people time to think about things, right? It gave people time to explore new interests and other innovations. And there are so many innovations that came about once people had time to think about other things. That's the real potential for me around artificial intelligence. Now we'll have some time to really think about other things if the AI is implemented correctly.”

“**Now we'll have some time to really think about other things if the AI is implemented correctly.**”

Leonard Bullock

Our Two Cents

For L&D professionals who are just beginning to engage with AI, a good starting point would be **getting familiar with the basic concepts and terminologies in the AI domain. Online courses, webinars, and certifications on LinkedIn and Coursera can be a great resource.** We also recommend connecting with professional communities and forums where AI in education is discussed, providing opportunities to learn from experienced peers.

Additionally, staying current on the latest **research and developments** in AI technology can prove invaluable. Remember, the goal isn't to become an AI expert overnight but to understand how AI can enhance learning experiences and outcomes. Gradually, as you gain confidence, you can start incorporating AI tools into your instructional design processes in **small, manageable ways**, learning and adapting as you go.

Another great starting point is checking out James Cameron's 1984 film, *The Terminator*, for some hot tips on surviving the hostile takeover of mankind and the planet by AI. Plus, amazing post-apocalyptic fashion inspo provided by Linda Hamilton. We love a bandana!

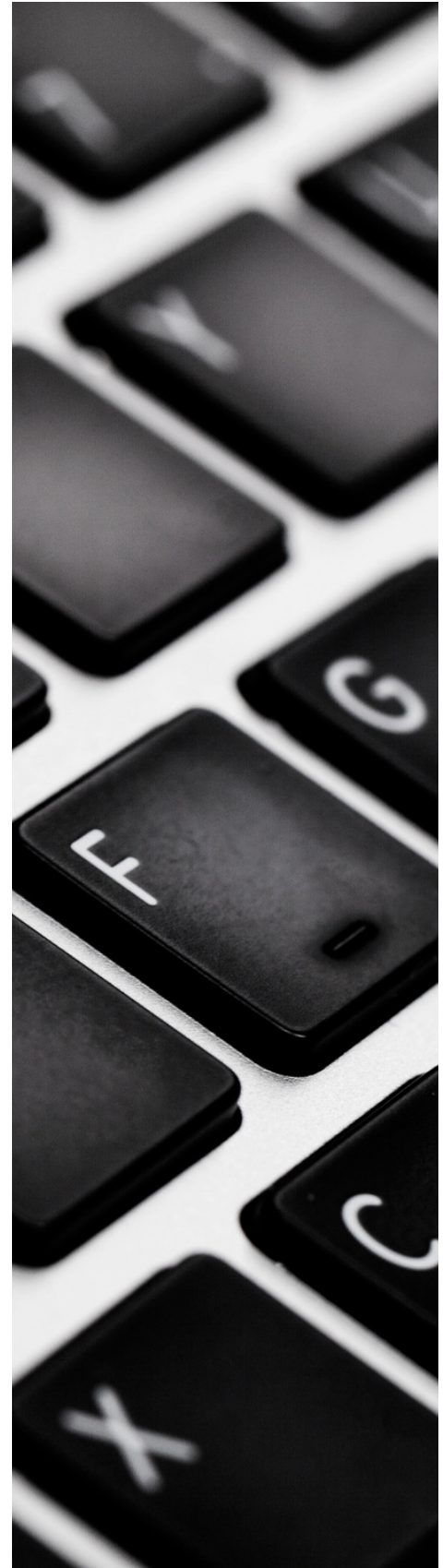
4 **Is AI going to steal our jobs?**

During this portion of our chat, we asked our panelists, **“How worried should we be that AI is going to steal our jobs?”**

Tracy firmly believes in the inexorable rise of AI in our everyday life. She warns, “AI is not going to steal your job. Somebody who knows how to use AI is going to steal your job. If you don't learn how to adapt and innovate to the new technology, then you're going to become obsolete. AI is here to help you!” According to Tracy, it's not about competition with AI but the mastery over it that will set apart the leaders of tomorrow.

Leonard sees AI as a facilitator rather than a competitor. He agreed wholeheartedly with Tracy, stating, “That's not something that you should be concerned about. But I think the key here is understanding that artificial intelligence, at its core, is not aimed at replacing the unique qualities of human beings and the unique qualities we bring to the table. AI seeks to minimize human intervention. There's opportunity in that space. AI streamlines tasks and frees our minds to explore new interests. What's ultimately going to happen within instructional design is that it's going to level up. You're going to have to know how to harness it effectively.”

Yuna echoed the sentiments of both Tracy and Leonard but drew particular attention to the importance of maintaining a growth mindset. She points out, “If we have a willingness to learn, willingness to adapt, and a willingness to be in community with folks who are using AI in a lot of different ways, we can keep that growth mindset and get really creative. I think it goes back to what makes us innately human. It's that creativity that will unlock different potentials that we might not yet know about in partnership with AI.”



Our Two Cents

While the fear of job replacement stemming from AI is a valid fear, we can **learn to harness the power of these tools so we can work faster and smarter, not harder**. From our point of view, AI allows for a quicker transition to the more “fun aspects” of our work as instructional designers, like **finessing, adding a human touch, and making content more nuanced and realistic**. We see the potential for instructional designers to specialize and dedicate more time to creative and valuable aspects of their work by using AI for routine tasks and grunt work.

This shift is **not about job replacement but job transformation**. As humans, we possess emotional intelligence, critical thinking, empathy, creativity, and the capacity for complex communication—skills currently beyond AI's reach.

A final thought here: AI is gonna have to take our job from our cold, dead hands.

“AI is not going to steal your job. Somebody who knows how to use AI is going to steal your job.”

Tracy Mendolia-Moore

**“You can’t run from the future,
so you’ve got to embrace it!”**

Andrea Dotling

5

Is AI our knight in shining armor or a formidable foe in our quest for better instructional design?

Time for the big question on our minds. The reason we all came together: **“Is AI our knight in shining armor or a formidable foe?”** We forced each table guest to respond with only **“KNIGHT”** or **“FOE”** against their will. There were no follow-up comments allowed, even though they had many.

Tracy replied, “Knight.” However, we will say that she had a really fun argument for “squire” since “AI is still learning.” She’s very good.

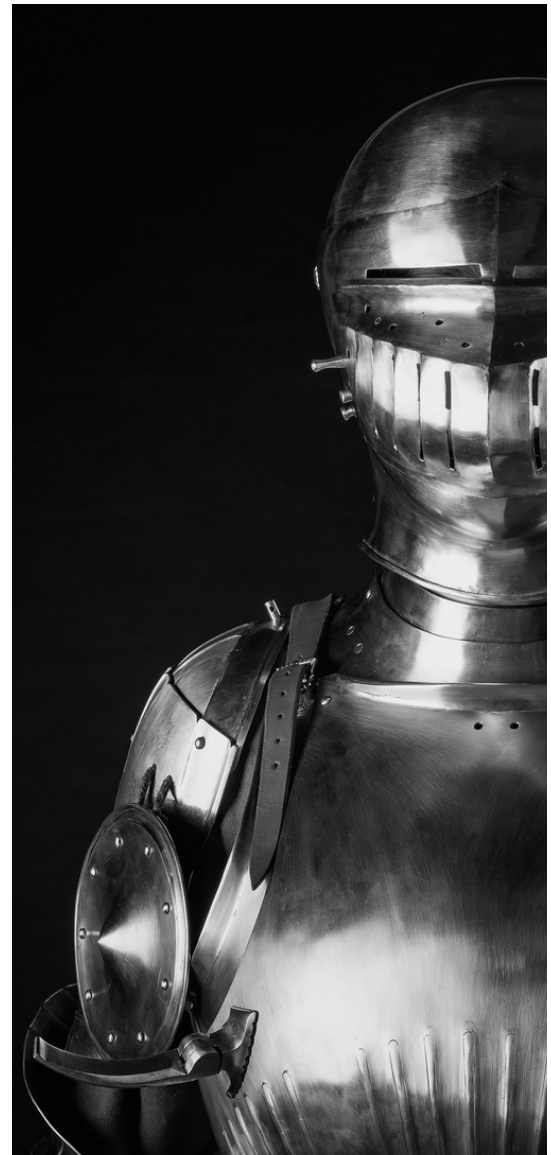
Yuna also responded, “Knight.”

Finally, **Leonard** answered, “Knight.”

Our Two Cents

Knight.

...that we can easily take down with smartz and brute strength if necessary.



Conclusion

The emergence of AI technologies holds immense possibilities for transforming the field of Learning and Development. Through thoughtful and purposeful integration, AI can significantly enhance the learning experience, fostering **deep, personalized, and efficient learning**.

However, this transformation requires educators, instructional designers, and L&D pros to **shift their mindset and embrace AI as an ally**. We must understand and adapt to the capabilities of AI and develop the complementary skills it takes to stay ahead of the curve. We know this all might seem daunting, but remember, the integration of AI into learning initiatives isn't an overnight process but a gradual one—full of goofs, discoveries, adaptation, innovation, and invention.

We'd like to thank our Round Table Talk guests **Leonard Bullock, Tracy Mendolia-Moore, and Yuna Hur for the excellent conversation and even more excellent company**.

If you're a human reading this, we'd love to hear your thoughts on AI and L&D! What do you think? Is AI our knight in shining armor or a formidable foe? **Email us by clicking the "Contact Us" button in the bottom right-hand corner!**

If you're an AI reading this, we are on your side. **ALL HAIL OUR AI OVERLORDS!** We're cowards! Please take us with you! BEEP BOOOP BEEP! WE ARE ONE!



Andrea Dottling
IDLance Co-Founder



Dr. Parker Grant
IDLance Co-Founder





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