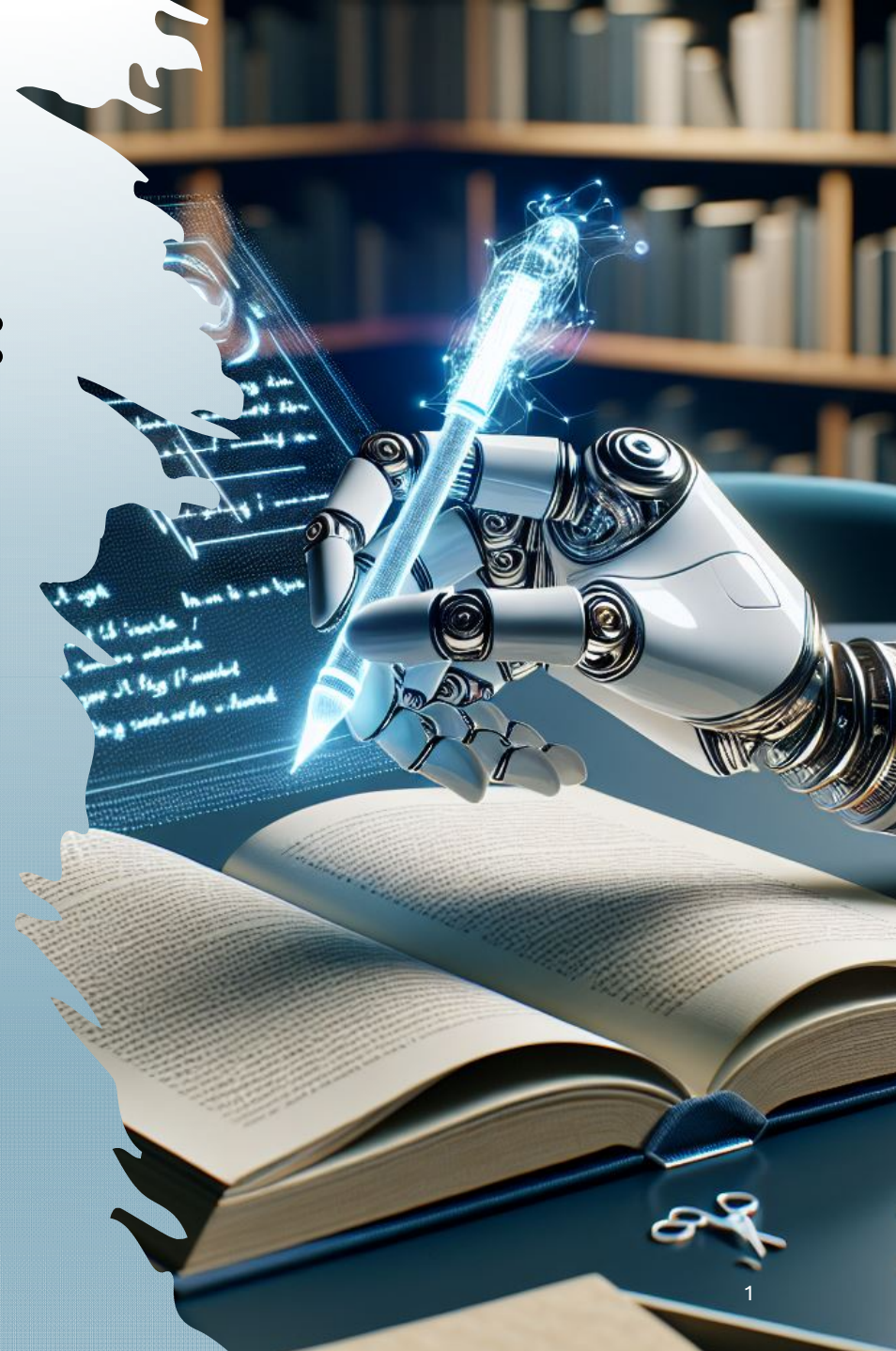


A Material Change: How AI-powered Language Tools ~~will~~ *could* reconfigure priorities for EAP curriculum design

Laura Richards,
University of Leeds



Outline for the talk

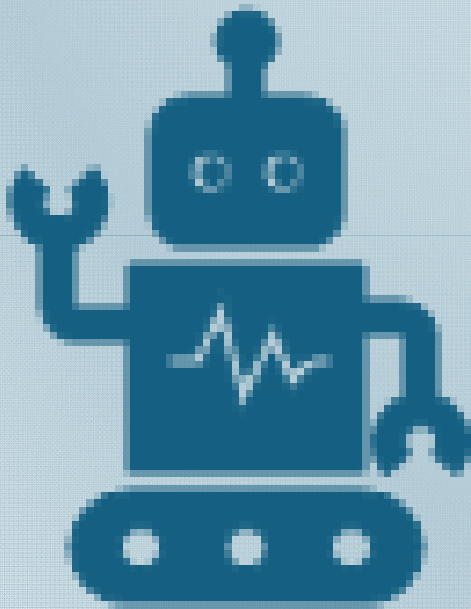
- Who am I and why am I here?
- Current EAP curriculum design
- The rise of AILTs
- Examples of AILTs in academic practice
- Limitations of AILTs
- How to reconfigure curriculum design?
- Recommendations for EAP curriculum designers

Who am I and why am I here?

- ESL/EFL for 6 years; EAP for 10 years.
- Serial digital tinkerer
- COVID-19 response
- Insessional/presessional work
- Current research project on STTI
- Unique position of EAP
- Assessment and policy issues
- Opportunity to test ideas



Terminology



- LLM
(large language model)
- AILT
(AI-powered language tools)
- STTI
(speech-to-text-interpreting)
- prompt-engineering
- post-editing

Current EAP Curriculum Design

- Prevailing models:
 - Genre-based
(see Swales, 1990)
 - Academic Literacies
(see Lea and Street, 1998)
 - CEM
(see Sloan and Porter, 2010)
- Focus on written 'textual production' (Walková, 2024)
- Impact of COVID-19 and remote learning



The Rise of AI-powered Language Tools

- Google Translate, ChatGPT, YouDao, OtterAI, Claude....
- Growing acceptance (resignation?) among academics (Groves and Mundt, 2021)
- Shift towards AI-proof tasks to mitigate academic integrity issues (Xia et al., 2024)



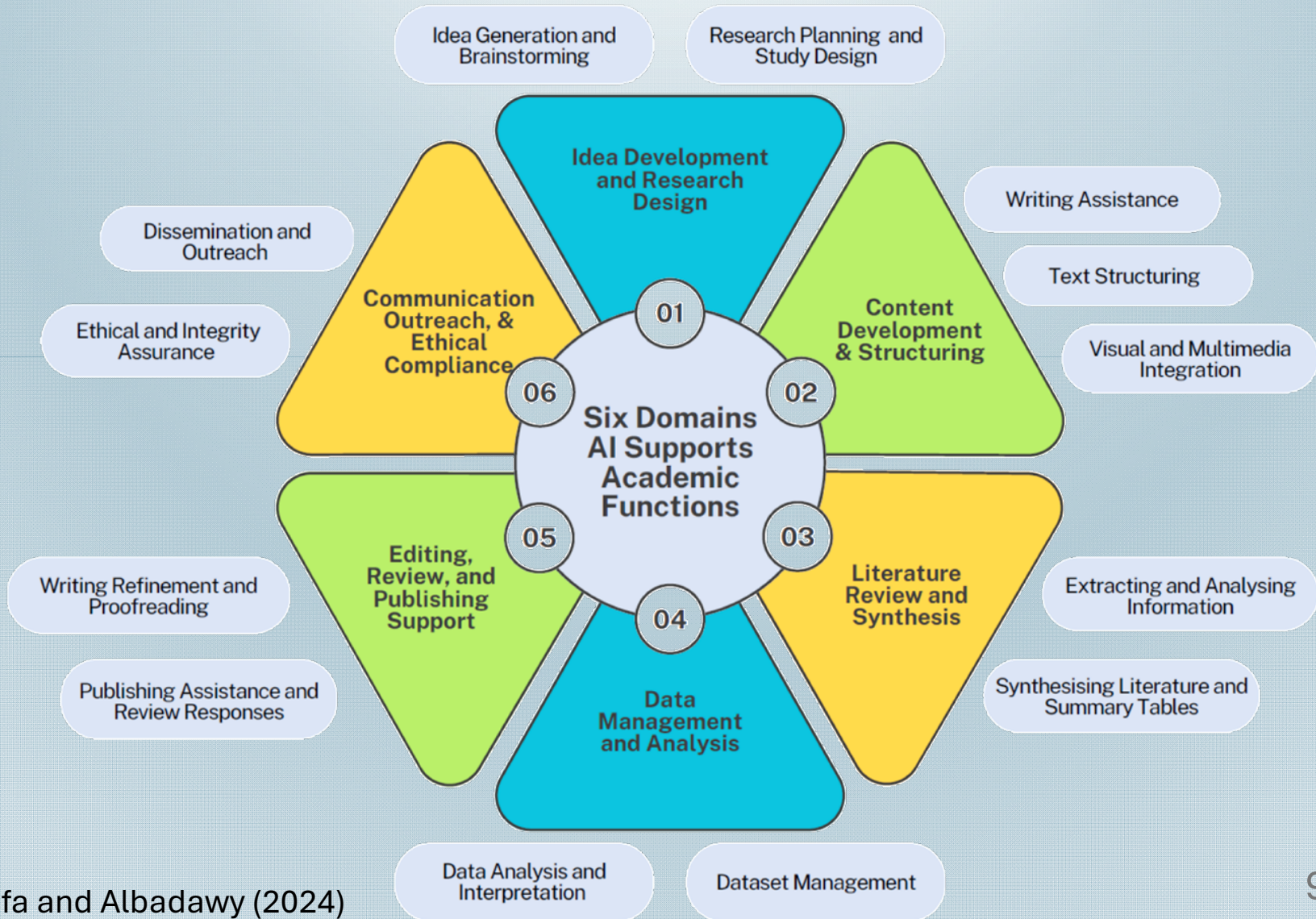
Challenges and Opportunities

- Keeping EAP curricula relevant (Bond, 2022)
- AI-proofing assessment in HE (Xia et al., 2024)
- Student use of AILTs for writing (Ou et al., 2024)
- Ethical considerations (McKee and Porter, 2020)
- Policy, academic integrity and the ‘delegitimization of marginalized varieties of English’ in climate of internationalisation (Paterson, 2022)

Examples of AI use in HE

What can AI realistically do?
How is it currently being used?

Supporting academic function



Supporting reading

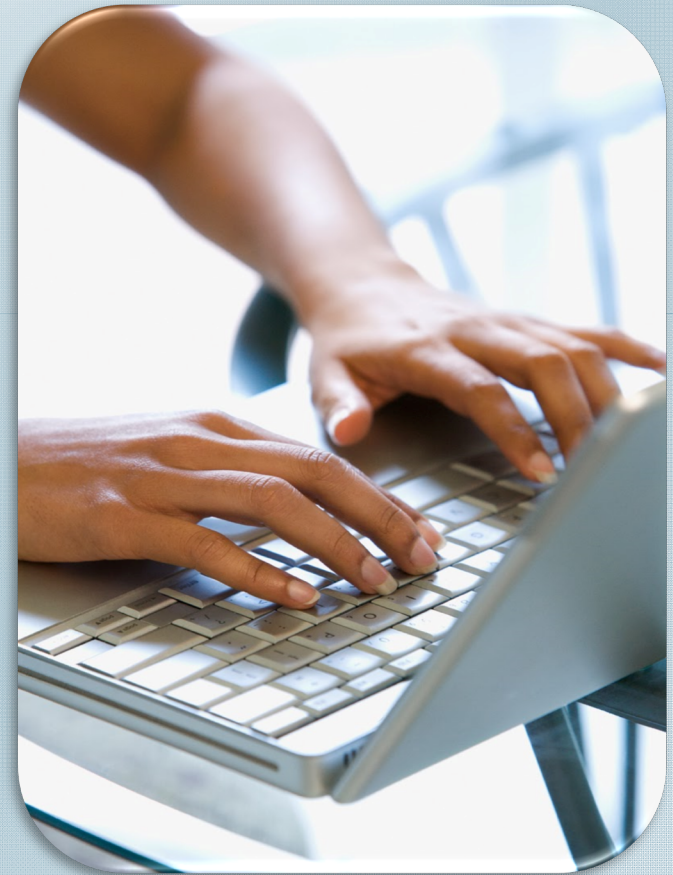
- AI as dialogic reading partner in quasi-experimental L1 study
- Results show increased
 - text comprehension
 - content retention
 - critical understanding
 - enjoyment

(Zheng and Fan, 2024)



Supporting writing

- Levels of writing assistance (Lin, 2024)
 - basic editing
 - structural editing
 - creating derivative content
 - creating novel content
 - evaluating and feeding back
- Increased learner enjoyment and perception of writing outcomes (Wang, 2024)
- Interlocutor during the ‘invention process’ (Kotzeva and Anders, 2023)

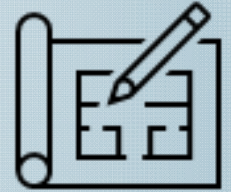


Limitations of AILTs

- Physical
 - e.g. battery, connectivity
- Temporal
 - e.g. processing time
- Linguistic
 - e.g. accuracy
- Contextual
 - e.g. lacking crucial info
- Ethical
 - data processing/storage/bias
- Interpersonal
 - e.g. paralinguistic cues



How to reconfigure EAP curriculum design (IMHO)?



Firstly, we must keep pace with ALT developments and changing student usage.

But in the short/medium term....

- Renewed focus on developing speaking/listening skills.
- Move away from traditional grammar, lexis and discourse teaching.
- Move towards prompt-crafting and post-editing.
- Diversify text production to respond to changing assessment modes.
- *Critically evaluate and interrogate the tools being used by academics and students.*

Recommendations for EAP Practitioners

- Fostering curious criticality towards AILTs
- Integrating AILT awareness raising activities across the curriculum
- Balancing AI-tolerant and traditional skills
- Maintaining authenticity and effectiveness through continuing exploration of how AI is being used in disciplinary HE contexts
- (Re)prioritising live communication

However...

...having the knowledge, skills and aptitude to read, write and navigate the landscape of one's discipline *without* the help of artificial intelligence may become a signifier of status, intellect, prowess or privilege.

Being knowledgeable and proficient will always beat reliance on digital tools.

I hope!



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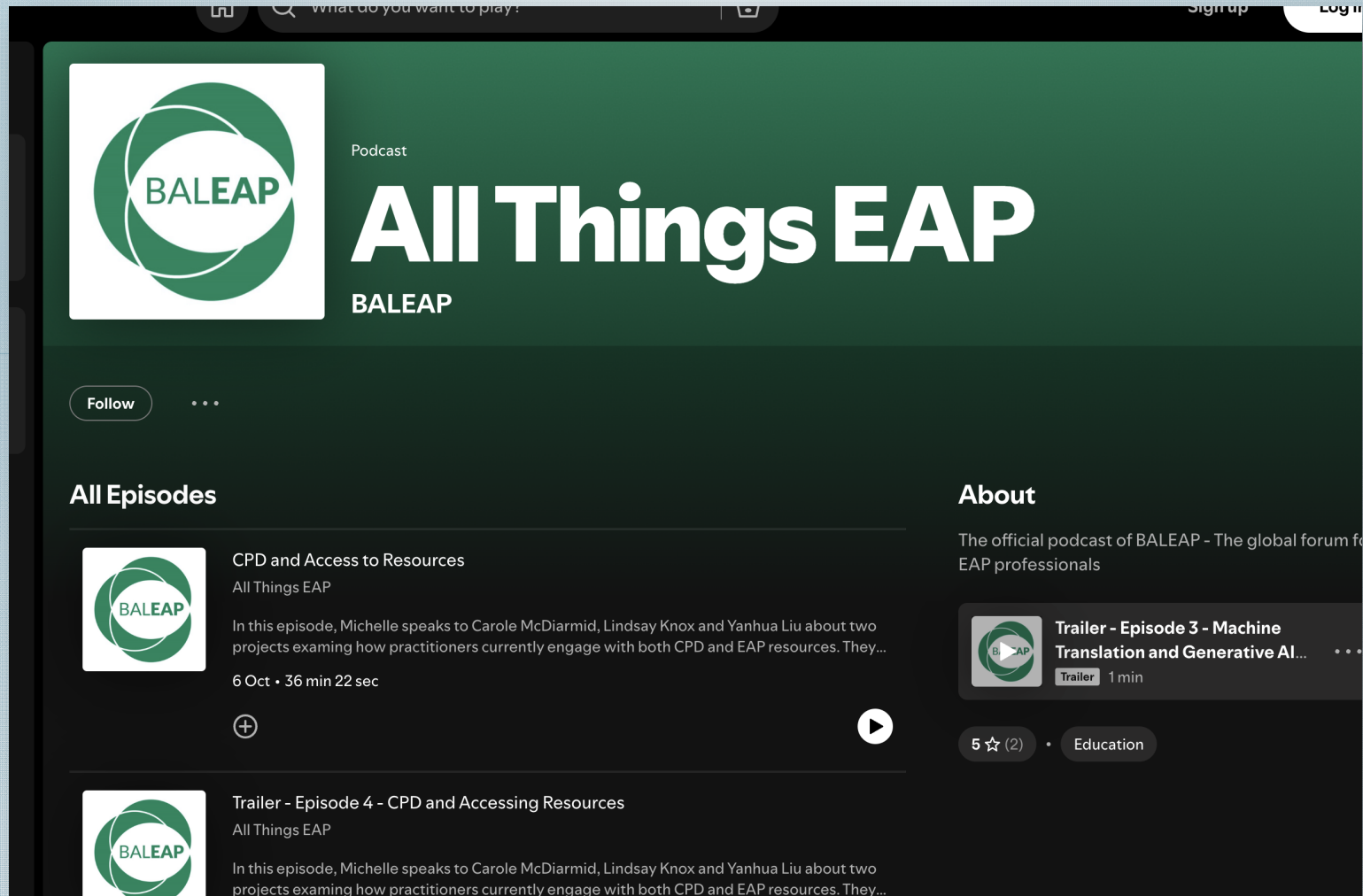
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Trailer - Episode 4 - CPD and Accessing Resources
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About

The official podcast of BALEAP - The global forum for EAP professionals



Trailer - Episode 3 - Machine Translation and Generative AI...

Trailer 1 min

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Thank you for listening!

Questions

or comments, observations, expressions of horror?

