

Practice Education: Teaching Reflective Practice when AI is at play.

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Introductions

Who are we?

Experienced practice educators, addressing AI in practice education at all stages.

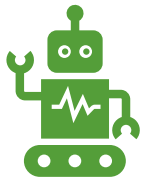
Who are you?

Please tell us, where and with who you work.

What's your *quick* take on AI and practice education?

Learning Aims

in this session we will..



Explore the issues AI raises for practice education.



Test out how AI compares to our advice (and that of Vanessa Feltz).

Explore why learners might use AI, and when this becomes problematic.



Think about how to make best use of AI (and mitigate its potential risks).

What is the purpose of reflective practice?



To support “learning from experience”.



To help process and contain the emotional demands of the work.



To develop professional curiosity and the capacity to hypothesise.



To capture the learning journey and articulate how we are developing our capacity to reflect, think critically and grow as social workers.

AI and Reflective Practice

AI is increasingly present in:

- reflective logs
- supervision preparation
- assessment writing
- critical reflection assignments
- direct work planning

The challenge is:

What happens to reflective practice when AI is at play?

Why do learners use AI?

Potential Uses:

Clarifying theory or legislation.

Rewording academic text for accessibility.

To support neurodivergent learners

Risks of Overreliance:

Structuring reflective writing or reports.

Using AI to replace critical reflection.

Generating placement logs or assessments.

Avoiding emotional or ethical engagement with content.

Motivators:

Academic pressure or time constraints.

Lack of confidence in writing or critical thinking.

Feeling overwhelmed on placement.

When Use Becomes Misuse




 Confidentiality Risks:



- Copying real case details into public AI tools = GDPR breach.



 Academic Integrity Issues:




- Submitting AI-generated work without attribution = plagiarism.



- Overly generic writing = red flag for misconduct.



 Professional Implications:



- Masking lack of learning = unsafe practice.



- Undermines PEPS focus on reflection, ethics, and readiness for ASYE.

AI and practice education, a new challenge

MIT has identified that strong students will use AI as a tool and get stronger. While weaker students will use AI as a tool and get weaker.

For educators this means we need to be able to engage with AI, to understand how we can use it as a tool in our own practice. This will help us both support the stronger students who want to use it effectively and the weaker students who may be using it to try and mask their challenges.

[Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task — MIT Media Lab](#)

Practice Educator Response



Educate Early:

- Talk openly about AI use and ethics in induction.

- Set boundaries and examples of acceptable use.

Student to keep AI Chats. Student and PE to discuss this is in supervision.

Talk about GDPR and “data hygiene”.



Deepen Assessment:

- Use verbal reflections in supervision.

- Explore inconsistencies between written and spoken work.

First Activity:

Choose a problem.

Ask AI what would it advise?

How does AI's advice compare to Vanessa's?
?

What would you advise?



THE WEDDING GUEST LIST

Hi Vanessa, My daughter is planning a 'minimalist' wedding and told me I can't invite my friends. I've known these women for forty years; they saw her through her goth phase!!

Alison, Devon

These ladies are your ride or die friends. They will understand that your daughter's wedding guest list is out of your control. The days when parents paid for their kids' weddings and called the shots are long gone. I remember my mum and dad graciously allowing me one table of guests at my wedding. I was livid but it was way back in 1985 and no one cared! Your pals will get the picture but that doesn't stop you inviting them to a special Bride's Mother's lunch/dinner/night on the town where you can celebrate your socks off together. Don't make the mistake of falling out with your daughter or allowing her wedding to be the breeding ground for resentment. She's the bride. It's her day. Accept that there will be elements not of your choosing, put on a broad smile and your best fascinator and have a ball.

A SPIRITUAL CALLING OR MIDLIFE CRISIS?

I've spent 30-years in accounting and suddenly want to open a shop that only sells custom-made hats for goats. My husband says it's a mid-life crisis. I say it's a spiritual calling. Who's right?

Kate, Kent

Your husband is right. Are you having a giraffe? That's not a business, it's an April Fool!! By all means branch out

and express your creativity but don't kid yourself there's a market for a product so whacky even seasoned goat herders will think you've lost the plot. If you do want a new venture why not start by taking some classes in business practice and accounting. It's wonderful to have a rich imagination but you don't want to bankrupt yourself going into a business that is doomed to failure on day one.

Second activity



In groups of 2–3:

Read the fictional reflective log.

What feedback would you give this learner?



What would you want to raise at your next supervision session?

Fictional Reflective Log

"I demonstrated empathy and professionalism throughout the home visit and ensured that the family felt heard and respected. I recognised the importance of anti-oppressive practice and maintained a child-centred focus at all times.

Following the visit, I reflected on the need to balance support with appropriate challenge and considered how attachment theory may help explain the child's presentation. In future, I will continue to develop my communication skills and confidence in difficult conversations."

Feedback

What are the key points from your group's discussion?

Signs Reflection May Be AI-Shaped

Possible indicators:

- overly polished tone
- emotionally generic language
- limited specificity
- formulaic reflective phrasing
- rapid movement to solutions
- absence of uncertainty
- theory disconnected from lived experience

These indicators are not proof.

In a world with an AI The supervisor or Practice Educator role may increasingly involve...

- Exploring reflective thinking verbally.
- Testing understanding through dialogue.
- Noticing emotional process.
- Exploring uncertainty and contradiction
Supporting ethical AI use

Assessment may increasingly rely on conversation, process and critical thinking — not simply written products.

Practical Principles

- **Use AI to widen thinking, not close it down.**
- **Encourage transparency rather than secrecy.**
- **Assess reflective depth, not simply reflective style.**
- **Maintain curiosity about emotional process.**
- **Protect relationship-based supervision.**
- **Professional accountability remains human.**
- **Be mindful of the needs of neurodivergent learners.**

Final thoughts

- WHAT HELPS PRESERVE AUTHENTIC REFLECTIVE SPACE IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS?
- WHERE MIGHT AI GENUINELY SUPPORT LEARNING AND REFLECTION?
- WHERE ARE THE RISKS GREATEST?
- WHAT MIGHT STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS NEED FROM ONE ANOTHER NOW?

AI MAY HELP GENERATE REFLECTIVE LANGUAGE.

BUT REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION MATTERS BECAUSE IT HELPS PRACTITIONERS REMAIN THOUGHTFUL, ETHICAL AND EMOTIONALLY PRESENT IN SITUATIONS WHERE CERTAINTY IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Stay in touch



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CONTACT ME FOR REFERENCES AND LINKS.