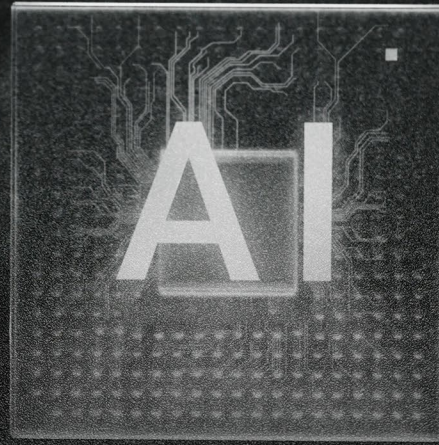




WE TESTED AI COURSE TOOLS

HERE'S WHERE THEY ACTUALLY HELP

Expectations vs reality, and what eLearning teams should do next

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A transparent field guide for eLearning teams

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FOREWORD

Transparency over hype

This ebook is a field report, not a sales pitch.

Learning teams have always adapted to evolving tools, processes, and business priorities. But AI is pushing the pace of change beyond what traditional training cycles can handle.

In response, AI-powered eLearning creation and authoring tools now promise dramatic speed gains—sometimes even “one-click” eLearning development.

So we tested them at
Constellar Consulting.

Disclaimer:

This ebook is based on human-led experiments and human-authored insights.

What you can expect

- ◆ A clear view of what AI genuinely enables
- ◆ Where AI falls short (even when outputs look impressive)
- ◆ Risks with deploying AI in learning
- ◆ Practical guidance for designers and developers
- ◆ No tool promos, no hype, and no false promises



Key points

- ◆ Based on hands-on experiments
- ◆ No tool promos
- ◆ Human-written insights
- ◆ For business leaders, functional heads, L&D leaders, program managers, instructional designers, graphic designers, eLearning developers

THE BIG SHIFT

AI changes the pace, not the purpose of eLearning.

AI has changed the pace of production in Learning & Development (L&D). Drafts can be created in minutes. Visuals can be generated instantly. Content can be converted into different formats quickly. For learning teams under pressure, this speed can feel like relief.

But AI has not taken over the job of learning designers, nor has it changed why eLearning exists. The purpose of eLearning is still the same: help people learn something that improves performance. That requires clarity, relevance, accuracy, and practice that actually prepares learners for the job.

This is where many AI conversations go wrong: Teams focus on speed first... and quality becomes an afterthought.

The teams that benefit most from AI won't be the ones who produce "more content faster." They'll be the ones who use AI to create time for better thinking—better decisions, better structure, better practice, and better learning outcomes.

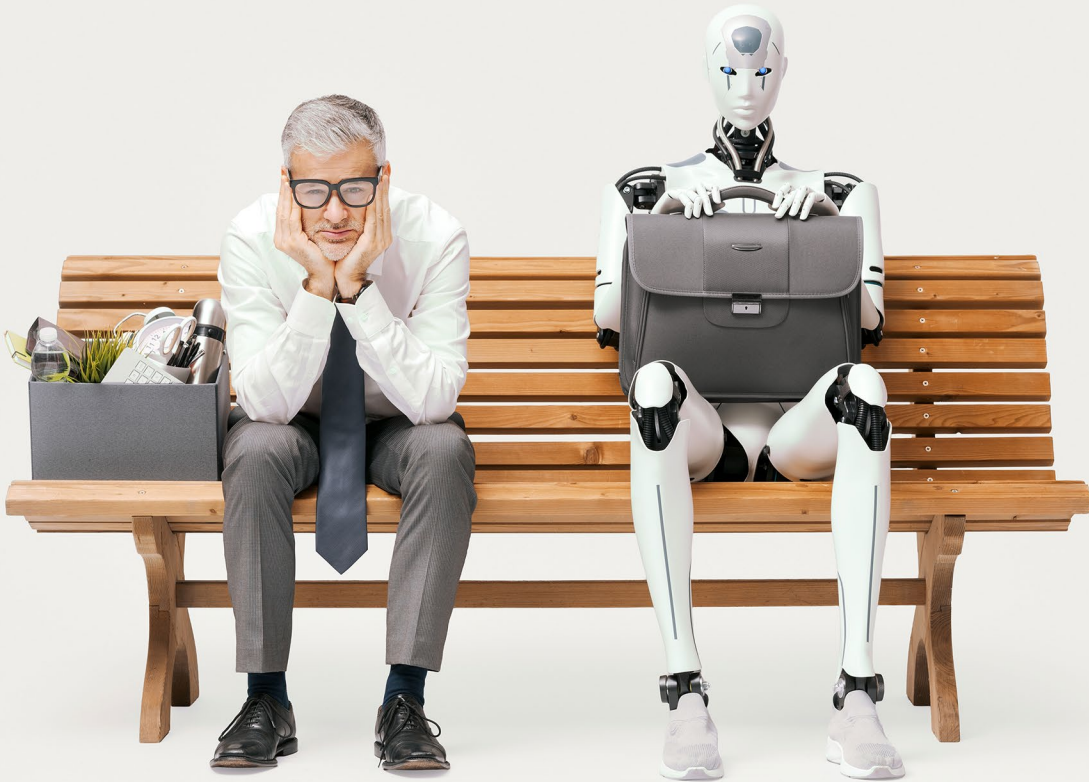


Key points

- ◆ AI increases speed and volume
- ◆ Learning purpose stays unchanged
- ◆ Execution vs judgment
- ◆ Use speed to improve thinking time

BUSTING THE MYTHS: EXPECTATIONS VS REALITY

AI is a production accelerator, not a learning designer.



AI tools in eLearning are often introduced with big expectations. In L&D discussions, we repeatedly saw the same assumptions show up because the marketing of these tools sounds convincing.

Here are the most common myths:

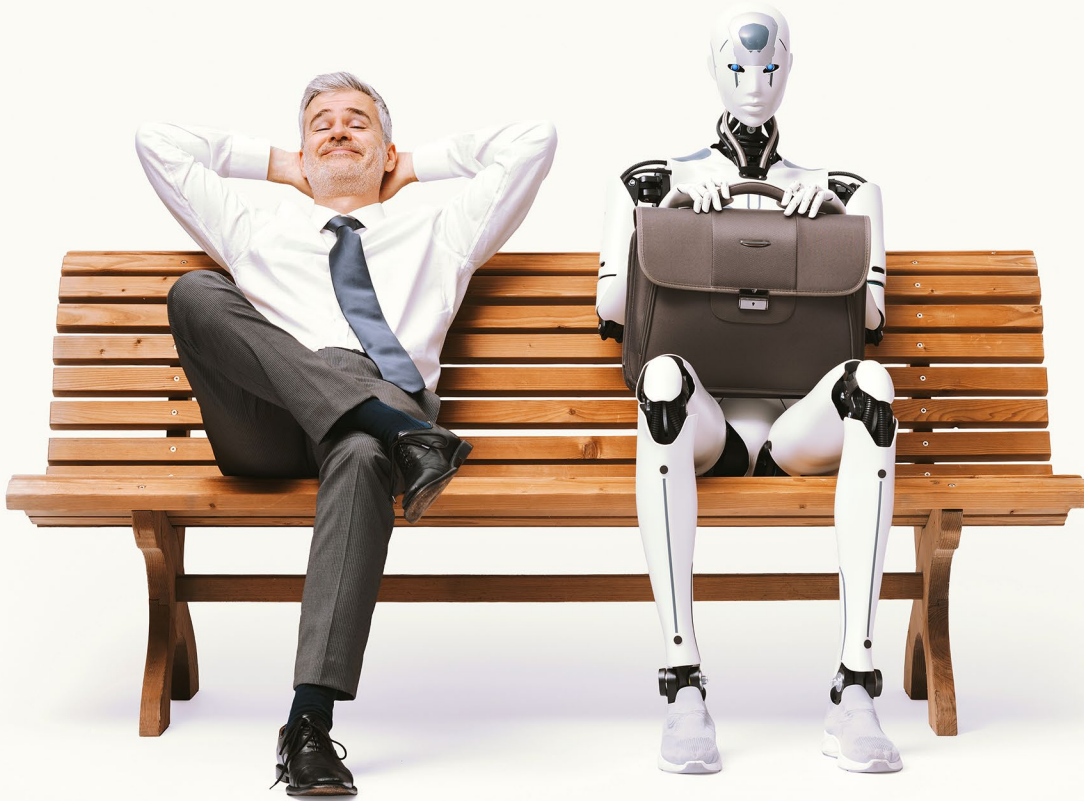
- ◆ AI will build complete eLearning with minimal human input.
- ◆ AI will reduce the need for instructional designers and designers.
- ◆ AI will produce high quality eLearning with its vast knowledge base.
- ◆ AI will shrink review cycles and reduce stakeholder feedback.
- ◆ AI will make interactivity and personalization effortless.

These expectations are understandable. Learning teams are stretched. Timelines are tight. And AI is being positioned as a shortcut.

But speed alone does not ensure effectiveness.

BUSTING THE MYTHS: EXPECTATIONS VS REALITY

AI is a production accelerator, not a learning designer.



When we tested AI eLearning tools, one pattern was consistent: AI is excellent at producing a starting point and unreliable as a finishing partner.

What AI does well:

- ◆ Creates quick first drafts
- ◆ Enables rapid prototyping
- ◆ Suggests basic structure and sequencing
- ◆ Converts input into different formats (notes into slides, text into scripts)
- ◆ Generates variations quickly

Where AI struggles:

- ◆ Aligning eLearning to business and performance outcomes
- ◆ Holding context and workplace relevance
- ◆ Deciding what's needed to meet outcomes and what's not
- ◆ Ensuring consistent accuracy in complex domains
- ◆ Designing practice that builds capability

The key insight is simple:

AI is a production accelerator. It is not an eLearning designer. Final quality depends on the humans who guide it, challenge it, and refine it.



Key points

- ◆ Common myths clarified
- ◆ Expectations vs reality comparison
- ◆ AI strong at drafts/structure
- ◆ AI weak at context, judgment, transfer

OUR GROUND-LEVEL EXPERIMENTS

Use AI to accelerate work—but never to outsource thinking.

We approached AI eLearning tools with curiosity and a lot of practical realism.

L&D doesn't work in perfect conditions.

We work with incomplete information, dense SME inputs, evolving scope, and deadlines that don't move.



So, we tested AI in the kinds of situations learning teams actually face:



Technical or
compliance-heavy content



High expectations for
clarity and polish



SME-rich material that
needs restructuring



Multiple audiences
and stakeholders

OUR GROUND-LEVEL EXPERIMENTS

Use AI to accelerate work—but never to outsource thinking.

What surprised us:

- ◆ AI dramatically reduced the “blank page” problem—starting from nothing.
- ◆ It helped teams move faster in early stages by generating drafts, outlines, and options quickly.
- ◆ It was especially useful for cleanup—rephrasing, restructuring, and simplifying drafts.



What disappointed us:

- ◆ Many outputs looked polished but lacked instructional depth.
- ◆ Drafts often felt generic, with a sameness that is designed for everyone but optimized for no one.
- ◆ Without strong human direction, content drifted away to generalized explanations.



What genuinely helped:

- ◆ When AI was used like a capable assistant—supporting execution while humans owned judgment.
- ◆ When designers provided intent, context, constraints, and standards, the quality of output improved significantly.



This is what responsible AI adoption looks like in L&D:

Use AI to support execution of tasks, but never to outsource thinking.

Let's look at what worked and what did not in more detail.



Key points

- ◆ Real workflow testing
- ◆ Surprising strengths
- ◆ Disappointing limitations
- ◆ AI works best with human direction

WHERE AI COURSE TOOLS ACTUALLY HELP

Starting points, not finished courses.



In our experiments, these were the strongest “value zones”:



Faster starting points

AI can generate early drafts, suggested structures, and placeholder content. This cuts down startup time and helps teams move into refinement faster.



Content transformation

AI can turn raw inputs into more usable formats—like restructuring SME notes into learning sections, rewriting dense text into learner-friendly language, or adapting content for different proficiency levels.



Generating variations

AI can create multiple versions of scenarios, examples, questions, and explanations—useful when content needs to work across different roles, regions, or contexts.



Rapid prototyping

AI can help teams produce “good enough” prototypes for early alignment—before investing time in full development.



Key points

AI helps with:

- ◆ Faster drafts and outlines
- ◆ Multiple versions and variants
- ◆ Content transformation
- ◆ Rapid prototyping for alignment

WHERE THEY FALL SHORT

Polished output is not effective learning.

AI can create content quickly. But it also introduces weaknesses that L&D teams can't afford to ignore - because they impact learning outcomes. Here are the most important limitations we observed:



Generic eLearning

Outputs often sound correct but feel generic. They miss the specificity that makes eLearning relevant and actionable to a specific group of learners.



Weak instructional logic

AI can generate explanations, layouts, and visuals too, but it doesn't reliably design learning. Practice and feedback often remain shallow unless a designer actively shapes them.



Risk of inaccuracies

AI-generated content can be inconsistent. In technical, regulatory, or high-stakes domains, reliability becomes a real concern.



Misleading "polish"

AI outputs may look complete—well-formatted, well-structured—but still fail to build capability or transfer of learning to the workplace.



Sameness at scale

If AI drafts are not curated, courses start to sound and look similar over time. This quietly erodes design quality and learner engagement.

These are not minor issues. They're exactly why human judgment becomes more important.



Key points

AI falls short with:

- ◆ Generic outputs
- ◆ Weak instructional logic
- ◆ Inaccuracies and poor reliability
- ◆ Polished looks but poor transfer of learning

RISKS YOU CAN'T IGNORE

Speed and scale multiply risk.

AI makes it easier to produce and distribute eLearning at scale. That also means it becomes easier to spread mistakes, poor design, and weak learning—at scale.



The key risks learning teams need to actively mitigate:

- ◆ Exposure of sensitive proprietary, personnel, and intellectual property data
- ◆ Reliability issues, especially in technical domains
- ◆ Bias and inclusivity concerns in language and representation
- ◆ Instructional quality dilution when speed becomes the priority
- ◆ Loss of brand voice and learning consistency

AI adoption is not only a technology decision. It is a quality decision. Responsible adoption requires:

- ◆ Strict policies and governance
- ◆ Thorough evaluation of tools for data protection and privacy
- ◆ Clear usage rules
- ◆ Defined quality standards
- ◆ Review and approval checkpoints in the workflow
- ◆ Role-based accountability



Key points

- ◆ Data privacy risks
- ◆ Reliability and bias concerns
- ◆ Quality dilution at scale
- ◆ Need rules + review checkpoints
- ◆ Adoption is a quality decision

HOW INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS CAN LEVERAGE AI

AI supports drafts and prototyping. Instructional Designers provide direction.

Instructional Designers can gain meaningful help from AI without sacrificing quality by using it to support execution work, but what cannot be delegated is learning quality, intent, relevance, practice, and transfer.



Practical ways AI can help Instructional Designers:

- ◆ Extract key concepts and simplify complex content without losing meaning
- ◆ Draft outlines and flows faster
- ◆ Rephrase and clean up language for clarity
- ◆ Generate scenario variations and examples for different contexts
- ◆ Create question sets and practice variations for reinforcement
- ◆ Draft feedback messages, hints, and alternative explanations

Instructional Designers must continue to own:

- ◆ Aligning learning to business outcomes
- ◆ Defining performance outcomes
- ◆ Deciding what learners truly need (and what they don't)
- ◆ Ensuring accuracy and relevance of learning content
- ◆ Managing cognitive load without oversimplifying
- ◆ Shaping practice, feedback, and assessment quality

HOW GRAPHIC DESIGNERS CAN LEVERAGE AI

AI generates visuals. Designers create meaning.

Graphic Designers can use AI to reduce time spent on repetitive production work and expand exploration—especially in early design stages—but visual meaning, clarity, and consistency in service of learning cannot be delegated.

Practical ways AI can help Graphic Designers:

- ◆ Generate multiple visual directions quickly during ideation
- ◆ Explore characters, backgrounds, and environments
- ◆ Create draft icons, illustrations, and UI elements for refinement
- ◆ Explore diagram and layout variations
- ◆ Support motion concept exploration (process explanations, attention guidance)
- ◆ Produce contextual visual variations across audiences

Graphic Designers must continue to own:

- ◆ Visual hierarchy that supports learning
- ◆ Clarity and meaning (not decorative visuals)
- ◆ Consistency with brand systems
- ◆ Inclusivity and representation
- ◆ Quality control and refinement

HOW ELEARNING DEVELOPERS CAN LEVERAGE AI

AI can enhance authoring. Developers protect stability and system behavior.

eLearning Developers can gain meaningful advantage from AI without compromising technical execution, but build integrity, system behavior, and technical quality cannot be delegated.



Practical ways AI can help eLearning Developers:

- ◆ Translate learning content, UI elements, navigation labels, and system instructions
- ◆ Produce text-to-speech audio for narration and guidance
- ◆ Generate code and logic patterns for custom interactivity and personalization
- ◆ Create varied sound effects for feedback, milestones, and engagement cues
- ◆ Support deep research into platform features, accessibility requirements, and innovation interaction possibilities
- ◆ Generate relevant visuals (in teams without dedicated Graphic Designers)

eLearning Developers must continue to own:

- ◆ Verifying completeness of translated content across all course elements (while accuracy is verified by an SME or language-expert)
- ◆ Controlling narration quality, tone, pacing, pronunciation, and emphasis
- ◆ Validating AI-generated code for logic and outcome
- ◆ Deciding when audio and sound effects support learning, and when it does not
- ◆ Ensuring visuals integrate cleanly, remain meaningful, and meet accessibility standards
- ◆ Maintain cross-device compatibility, performance, and final QA accountability

NO FALSE PROMISES

AI supports execution. Humans own judgment.



Adopting AI responsibly in L&D requires one clear boundary:
AI supports execution. Humans own judgment.

AI doesn't understand
consequences.

It doesn't understand
your learner's workplace.

And it doesn't carry
accountability.

Learning teams do.



When AI is used as a
co-creator, creation of
eLearning becomes faster.



When AI is treated as a
decision-maker, quality of
eLearning becomes fragile.



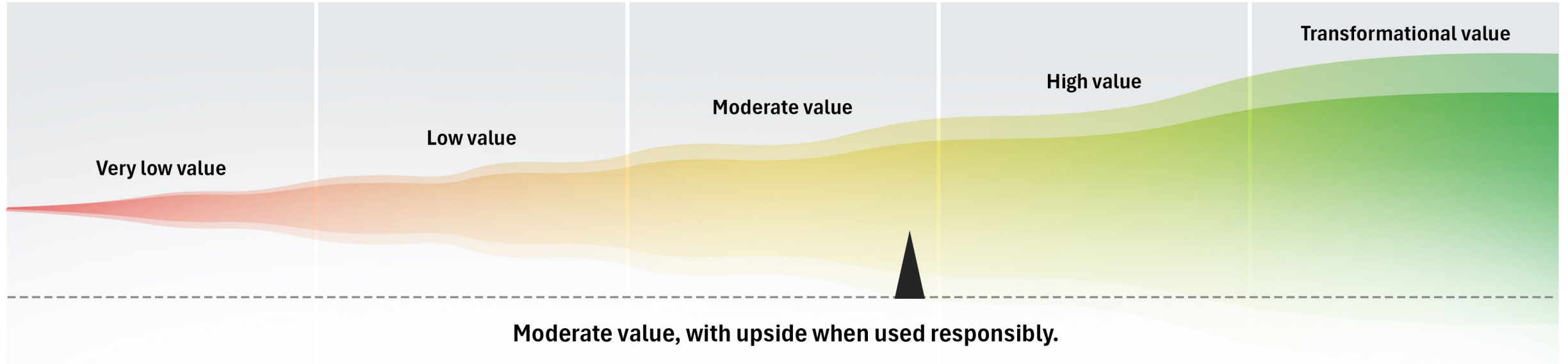
Key points

- ◆ AI lacks awareness of consequences
- ◆ Humans own accountability
- ◆ AI as co-creator, not decision-maker

OUR VERDICT

Highly useful, but with clear limits and conditions.

What level of value do AI tools provide for eLearning design and development today?



Why this rating?

- ◆ AI is strong at execution, especially for drafts, outlines, structures, variations, and production tasks.
- ◆ It is weak at judgment, including learning intent, relevance, practice, transfer, and quality
- ◆ It introduces risk at scale when used without clear data and usage policies and defined accountability

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

Closing reflections

Based on our hands-on testing, here are the practical recommendations we would give any learning team adopting AI in eLearning:

Start with one bottleneck

Pick a specific production pain point. Don't try to overhaul everything at once.

Use AI for drafts, not decisions

Let AI create versions and starting points. Keep human judgment central.

Define quality before scaling

Agree on what "good eLearning" looks like. Without standards, AI will amplify inconsistency.

Build review and approval points into the workflow

Review does not become optional. In fact, it becomes more important.

Protect learning intent

Instructional design quality is the biggest differentiator. Don't let speed dilute it.

Protect design integrity

Ensure visuals remain meaningful, consistent, inclusive, and learner-focused.

Measure impact, not just speed

Time saved matters. But only if learning effectiveness is preserved or improved.

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

Closing reflections



Our biggest takeaway from experimentation is simple:

AI can be extremely useful but only with human ownership.



The future of eLearning will not belong to teams who adopt AI fastest.

It will belong to teams who adopt AI responsibly without compromising learning quality.

LET'S USE AI TO CREATE SPACE FOR BETTER THINKING.



FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

If you're exploring AI adoption in eLearning,
we can help you move forward with clarity.

Book a 30-minute consult:
AI in eLearning Workflow Review

OR

Request a pilot project:
**1 module rebuilt with AI
acceleration + human QA**

Why Constellar?

Low-friction consult

Clear pilot offer

Human-led QA and quality