

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Invisible architects: Making learning designers' value visible in a changing landscape

Jennifer Boreland

Queensland University of Technology

Tanya Henry

The University of Queensland

Sue Sharpe

Deakin University

Higher education has recently experienced significant disruptions from the COVID pandemic to the rise of generative AI. In addition, a focus on inclusion and accessibility have required thoughtful and intentional responses to the design of quality learning. Technology plays a significant role in designing these responses and contributing to innovative learning experiences that prepare students for the real world (Pelletier et al., 2022).

While these disruptions and changes are challenging, they provide opportunities to spotlight the valuable role of education and learning designers in supporting transitions to online learning, redesigning assessment and creating engaging online learning activities and environments (Bellaby et al., 2020). These (predominantly) professional staff are critical to the design and development of technology enhanced learning experiences (D'Souza, Luu & Cui, 2022, Altena et al., 2019, Halupa, 2019).

However, despite their valuable contribution to this work, the contribution of education and learning designers remains largely hidden, undocumented and unacknowledged in the sector. Bisset (2018, p. 18) noted that "Educational designers themselves need support and professional development to identify and articulate the way in which their professional interactions at the personal, relational, and institutional level bring different dimensions to the role" and D'Souza et al. (2022) similarly highlighted the need for future research to identify the influence of educational designers.

To address these identified needs, the Learning Design Evidence Framework has been developed to assist learning designers to support their value proposition in collaborations with academic teams, guide them to be more intentional in those collaborations, and provide a means to evidence to institutions the impact of good design in promoting quality teaching and learning. It is a means by which learning designers can 'show' what they 'know and do'. (Boreland, Henry & Sharpe, 2025).

This makes it an invaluable resource for leaders and managers of project teams or learning design units who can use the Framework to showcase the value, impact, and contributions of these teams or units in meeting the challenges currently faced in higher education and/or in advancing institution-wide goals.

This session provides a brief overview of the Framework and a case study of how it is being implemented at one university. The session will challenge other team leaders and managers to think about how they can evidence and promote the value learning designers bring to the creation of quality learning for successful student outcomes in an era of continuous change.

Keywords: learning designer, education design, learning design framework, evidencing value

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ASCILITE 2025

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