Empowering Professional Growth in Learning Design Through Self-Directed Lecturer Training

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ABSTRACT
With higher education rapidly evolving, early-career lecturers face challenges in developing a clear professional identity. This study explores how self-directed professional development supports career growth in learning design through a collaborative self-study of teaching practices over 3.5 years, using data from the 2026 Inspiring Lecturer Program (ILP). Three collaborators analyze bootcamp transcripts, project submissions, and narrative reflections through an AI-supported workflow, combining self-reflection with external peer feedback. The findings indicate that structured yet self-directed learning, supported by critical friendship and AI tools, strengthens lecturers' ability to design effective learning experiences and bridge theory with practice. The study highlights critical reflection and collaboration as essential to the transition from novice to expert, emphasizing that professional autonomy involves not only developing skills but also independently designing, implementing, and evaluating teaching methods.

ABSTRAK
Seiring dengan pesatnya perubahan dalam pendidikan tinggi, dosen muda menghadapi tantangan dalam membangun identitas profesional yang jelas. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pengembangan profesional secara mandiri dapat mendukung perkembangan karier dalam desain pembelajaran melalui studi mandiri kolaboratif terhadap praktik mengajar selama 3,5 tahun, berdasarkan data dari program Inspiring Lecturer Program (ILP) 2026. Penelitian ini melibatkan tiga kolaborator yang menganalisis transkrip kegiatan pelatihan, hasil proyek, dan refleksi naratif menggunakan alur kerja berbantuan kecerdasan buatan (AI). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan diri yang terstruktur, didukung oleh refleksi kritis, kolaborasi, dan umpan balik rekan sejawat, dapat meningkatkan kemampuan dosen dalam merancang pengalaman belajar yang efektif serta menghubungkan teori dengan praktik. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kemandirian profesional tidak hanya mencakup penguasaan keterampilan, tetapi juga kemampuan merancang, melaksanakan, dan mengevaluasi pembelajaran secara mandiri.

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INTRODUCTION

Various disruptions have required many activities in higher education to adapt quickly (García-Morales et al., 2021). Lecturers, as leading actors, are expected to respond to the diverse needs of students, the rapid development of digital technology, the demands of high-quality research, the need for involvement in an impactful society, and the increasing popularity of institutions (Titirloloby et al., 2025). These expectations are very challenging for lecturers who are at the beginning of their careers. These early-career lecturers are still in the process of developing a professional identity while learning to integrate teaching, research, and community service (Zhang & Gong, 2024).

Formal training can introduce useful concepts and techniques, but participation in professional development programs does not automatically lead to sustained change in professional practice (Boeve-de Pauw et al., 2022). The professional growth of lecturers is only beneficial if they actively examine strategies for interpreting new knowledge, adapting to change, implementing good practices, and self-evaluation in the context of their own abilities (Avidov-Ungar, 2025). For this reason, the self-study of teaching practice offers an important framework for understanding professional development as an ongoing process of inquiry rather than as passive skill acquisition (Pithouse-Morgan, 2022). Through self-study, lecturers treat their own teaching decisions, assumptions, experiences, and professional actions as legitimate sources of evidence for improvement (Brandenburg et al., 2023).

Independent learning is highly relevant to independent professional development, as it positions lecturers as active agents (Abou Said & Abdallah, 2024). Lecturers become active agents who identify their learning needs, choose the right strategies, document their actions, and evaluate the consequences of those actions (Issabayeva et al., 2025). However, reflections conducted only from an insider's perspective may be highly arbitrary, overly descriptive, and influenced by personal assumptions (Tan, 2021). Therefore, critical friendships become an important methodological and developmental component (Gulzar & Rafique, 2025).

Critical friends become trusted collaborators who question interpretations, identify overlooked assumptions, provide alternative explanations, and help distinguish perceived improvements from evidence of actual change (Kucera, 2025; Petroelje Stolle et al., 2019; Schuck & Russell, 2005). In this way, critical friendships do not reduce professional autonomy (Stockwell & Tafazoli, 2025; Wu, 2021; Zagami, 2026). Instead, it reinforces self-direction by making reflection more rigorous, dialogical, and accountable. The combination of self-study and critical friendship allows professional reflection to move beyond asking what a lecturer is learning to examine what has changed, why it has changed, and what evidence supports that interpretation (Chung & Fisher, 2022; Issabayeva et al., 2025; Yuan et al., 2025). Critical friendship strengthens professional reflection by making it more dialogical and more likely to reframe practice than reflection conducted in isolation (Behizadeh et al., 2019; Blake & Gibson, 2021; Gulzar & Rafique, 2025).

Professional learning can be strengthened by collegial interactions, reflective dialogue, and participation in a supportive academic community. Aster et al. (2021) found that teaching-related conversations in instructional improvement initiatives can create spaces where faculty members exchange experiences and reconsider their teaching practices. Similarly, Lane et al. (2022) show that the content and context of collegial conversations influence the sharing of innovative teaching knowledge and lecturers' responses to instructional challenges. Price et al. (2021) further show that faculty learning communities can support the implementation of inquiry-oriented curriculum by providing pedagogical ideas, problem-solving opportunities, and peer support. These findings suggest that professional learning is not solely an individual's cognitive process. It is also mediated socially through dialogue, shared practice, and access to colleagues who can challenge and broaden lecturers' thinking.

Related research also emphasizes the importance of context, adaptation, and evidence-based reflection (Bhagwandhin et al., 2025; El-Adawy et al., 2022; Martin et al., 2022; Zou et al., 2024). Lecturer agency develops through the interaction between individual goals and the opportunities and constraints within the institutional context (El-Adawy et al., 2022). The development of agency further helps lecturers adapt more easily to the learning environment. A professional learning environment is more effective when lecturers serve as facilitators who can adapt support to the varied needs of learning participants (Martin et al., 2022).

Support from leaders and peers is no less important. The results of classroom observation and post-observation dialogue from supervisors or peers assist educators in developing adaptive skills by connecting reflection with evidence, focused goals, and professional conversations (Bhagwandhin et al., 2025). Furthermore, when educators become good practices as research consultants, new knowledge about disciplines, curriculum, and student learning can be identified more easily (Zou et al., 2024). It is clear from these studies that professional development is most meaningful when lecturers can relate conceptual knowledge to practical decisions, examine evidence from their own contexts, and revise their actions through collaborative reflection.

The contributions of previous research have laid the foundation for the development of good practices in professional development. However, most of those studies center on educator learning communities, instructional conversations, facilitated professional development, classroom observations, or research-based curriculum. In contrast to previous research, our research explains lecturers' strategies to utilize the academic community and structured programs to support professional learning. More specifically, this study addresses the support needed by early-career lecturers as they transform participation in short-term professional development programs into a continuous, independent process of professional inquiry. There is also limited attention to the combined use of collaborative self-study, critical peer perspectives, multiple professional artefacts, and AI-powered analysis to examine the development of learning design capabilities. The research follows the process that early-career

lecturers go through as they interpret program content across teaching, research, and community engagement, while external collaborators critically examine the credibility of lecturers' reflections. This study addresses this distinction by positioning reflection not only as a final training activity but as a core framework within which professional learning is progressively documented, questioned, and redesigned.

At this stage, the study is still ongoing. The results presented in this paper are preliminary studies that aim to investigate independent professional development strategies to facilitate the growth of early career lecturers' professional abilities and agency in learning design through collaborative independent studies of teaching practices. This study documents the development of lecturers over the 3.5-year professional trajectory, with particular attention to experiences and artefacts related to the 2026 Inspirational Lecturer Program. The study analyzed bootcamp transcripts, project submissions, action plans, and narrative reflections through AI-powered workflows, while two critical peers provided an external perspective that examined, qualified, and refined the interpretation of the lead researcher's insider perspective. This research aims to explore how structured, yet independent learning, peer criticism, critical reflection, and AI-powered tools can help bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical design, implementation, and evaluation of learning experiences.

This research is important because early-career lecturers often need more than isolated pedagogical techniques. They need a mechanism to decide on the skills to learn, translate ideas into practice, gather evidence, and revise their professional actions over time. By integrating independent learning with critical friendships, this research can contribute to an evidence-based model of professional autonomy in which independence is developed through disciplinary reflection and collaborative supervision. These findings can help early-career lecturers view professional development as an ongoing design process they can initiate and manage on their own. The study can also inform institutions that want to design faculty development programs that go beyond content delivery by incorporating reflective artefacts, critical peer dialogue, action planning, and follow-up evaluation. Ultimately, his contribution lies in showing how lecturers can become not only trainees but also independent designers, researchers, and evaluators of their own professional practices.

METHODS

Data processing for this study is ongoing; therefore, the results presented are preliminary. This research adopts a collaborative self-study methodology to investigate strategies for self-directed professional development that foster early-career lecturers' abilities, confidence, and professional agency in learning design. Self-study was selected because the inquiry centers on my own teaching practices, professional learning, and interpretations of change over time. My participation in the 2026 Inspirational Lecturer Program is situated within a 3.5-year professional trajectory that includes initial experiences in teaching, research, publishing, and community engagement. As the principal investigator, I occupy an insider position as both participant and researcher. This role provides direct access to personal decisions, uncertainties, learning processes, and professional artefacts, but also introduces the risk of excessive subjectivity in reflection. To mitigate this, the study employs critical friendship as a core methodological framework. Two collaborators serve as critical companions who interrogate my interpretations, question assumptions, propose alternative explanations, and help differentiate perceived improvements from evidence of enacted professional change.

The study involves three collaborators. I am an early-career lecturer entering my fourth academic year and have recently obtained my first academic ranking while participating in the 2026 ILP. The other two collaborators are lecturers with established careers. Our professional relationship began during our postgraduate studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Both collaborators contribute external and ethical perspectives during the interpretation process. Their role extends beyond confirming my reflections; they challenge claims, identify potential exaggerations, and examine available data to support conclusions about professional development. This collaborative arrangement enables the research to combine the depth of an emic perspective with the analytical distance provided by critical peers. The inclusion of critical friends ensures that research on independent professional development remains connected to the broader academic community. Furthermore, professional autonomy can be enhanced when lecturers actively engage peers, mentors, students, communities, and digital tools as resources for critical inquiry.



Figure 1. Research Procedure Applied for This Study

Data were drawn from materials related to the 2026 ILP and from reflections linking the program to the broader professional development of researchers. The dataset includes bootcamp transcripts, notes from program sessions, project submissions, and narrative reflections. Five assignment artefacts are examined in detail: an orientation reflection, a learning design for Generation Z students, a research canvas, a sustainable community engagement canvas, and a final reflection that includes a professional mission statement and an individual development plan. These artefacts were chosen because they document the movement from initial participation to design, implementation planning, and evaluation of professional actions. They also represent the interconnected fields of teaching, research, and community engagement emphasized within Indonesia's Tri dharma framework. Additional reflective writing clarifies how the researcher interprets the program's relevance, acquires practical knowledge, develops confidence, and formulates intentions for subsequent professional practice.

The data is analyzed through an iterative thematic labelling process to organize the material, identify recurring expressions, compare content across artefacts, and support initial code grouping. The analysis focuses on several iterative dimensions: the fit between the content of the program and the stage of the lecturer's career, the translation of theoretical ideas into practical learning design decisions, the development of competency-based confidence, the integration of teaching, research, and community involvement, and the emergence of self-regulating professional agents.

Trust is strengthened through repeated comparisons between data sources, reflective accounts, and collaborator interpretations. The initial theme was reviewed by two critical peers, who examined whether the claim was adequately supported and whether alternative readings were possible. The distinction between an insider's account and an external interpretation is maintained rather than eliminated, especially when the collaborator warns that beliefs, completed tasks, or positive perceptions should not automatically be presented as evidence of altered practices. Ethical attention is paid to transparent role disclosure, responsible use of AI, and the separation of reflective interpretations from demonstrated outcomes. Since this is a preliminary study, the analysis does not claim that the lecturer has achieved expert performance. Instead, it examines the evidence emerging from more intentional, collaborative, and self-sustaining mechanisms for designing, researching, and evaluating professional practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This analysis draws on bootcamp transcripts, five ILP project submissions, narrative reflections, and critical readings from two collaborators. In addition to examining the data, the analysis interpreted the relationship between the data and the development of the main researcher's early career trajectory over 3.5 years. The workflow begins with organizing, then comparing and reviewing the data to inform coding decisions, contextual interpretation, and the dissemination of the initial findings in this paper. At this stage, three interrelated findings were identified: the program provides a career-stage-appropriate structure for self-paced learning; conceptual knowledge translates into practical learning design agents; and critical friendships, combined with reflection, favor the emergence of professional autonomy. These findings are presented as evidence of capacity building rather than as a claim that expert performance has been achieved. In presenting the results, the first researcher will use the

word "I" and "me" to show the characteristics of "the self" commonly applied for the self-study of teaching practices' narratives

Structured Self-Learning in Early Career Transitions

The first finding is the program-career stage congruence. When I started taking ILP 2026, I was nearing the end of my fourth year as a lecturer and had just earned my first academic ranking. I have gained early experience in teaching, research, publication, and community involvement, but these responsibilities are still experienced as separate demands. Therefore, the program is relevant because it does not treat professional development as an isolated accumulation of techniques. Instead, it offers a framework through which I can examine how teaching, inquiry, and community engagement can be organized as coherent academic practices.

The program is structured, but participation is still self-directed. Each session introduces concepts and tools, while assignments require me to set priorities, relate them to my own context, and determine the evidence needed to assess progress. This combination is important. Structure reduces uncertainty during the career transition stage, while the need to make contextual decisions prevents training from becoming a prescriptive checklist. The result was a shift from attending professional development to using it as a resource to direct my own learning.

Table 1. Alignment between the selected components of the ILP and the needs of early-career professionals

Selected ILP components	Direct professional relevance	Evidence of self-study examined
Learning design for Generation Z and inspirational materials	Reframing teaching from presenting content to designing conditions for learning.	Submission of learning design, teaching material decisions, and reflections on student interaction.
Important research	Connecting publication expectations with focused, ethical, and useful investigation.	Research canvas, research priority decisions, and the relationship between research and teaching.
Research translated into community action	Research and service are integrated in Indonesia's Tri dharma rather than treating it as a separate obligation.	Canvas community engagement, stakeholder roles, sustainability planning, and links to student learning.
Reflection and action planning	Turn program participation into intentional professional learning and review.	Narrative reflections, mission statements, individual development plans, timelines, and evidence of proposed changes.

The training sessions provide a salient illustration of this alignment. These experiences shifted my focus from the quantity of content delivered to how students engage with, interpret, and apply disciplinary knowledge. Visualization, storytelling, gamification, and digital media are not merely supplementary features; they are essential design resources that must be purposefully integrated into learning outcomes, participation, feedback, and demonstrations of understanding. This approach has provided me with critical vocabulary to scrutinize decisions that were previously guided primarily by intuition. Consistent with this perspective, existing research indicates that professional learning is enhanced when lecturers collaboratively discuss specific teaching challenges, share practices, and systematically examine evidence (Aster et al., 2021; Lane et al., 2022).

The research and community engagement component addresses the second source of fragmentation. The research canvas frames publications as outcomes of a comprehensive process that includes focused agendas, ethical data practices, collaboration, student mentorship, and sustainable contributions. The community engagement canvas extends this framework by differentiating activities from outcomes and by recognizing the community as an active partner in knowledge production. Collectively, these components enable me to conceptualize teaching, research, and community engagement as interconnected and mutually generative elements of the Tri dharma. This perspective aligns with evidence suggesting that the relationship among research, disciplinary knowledge, and student learning should be intentionally structured and clearly communicated (Zou et al., 2024).

Reflection connects the program's structure with self-direction. The central question shifts from "What knowledge do I receive?" to "What will I change, what evidence will I gather, and how will I decide if the change is beneficial?" Both collaborators qualify for my positive insider account. One stresses that perceived relevance does not equal the improvements shown. Others question whether short programs can support continuous implementation without follow-up. Their reading refines these findings: ILPs do not automatically change practice but provide timely conceptual and reflective scaffolding for deliberately designing and examining improvements.

From Conceptual Insights to Learning Design Actions

The second finding concerns the translation of abstract professional expectations into actionable design practices. Prior to the program, improvement in teaching sometimes seemed to depend on personal charisma, accumulated experience, or access to informal academic networks. Improvements to the reformulation of ILPs as a deliberate process of design, experimentation, evidence gathering, and revision. Practical strategies include starting with authentic applications, using relevant analogies, creating visual micro-learning, enabling anonymous participation, providing direct feedback, and using gamification selectively. Their value lies not in novelty alone but in their contribution to a coherent learning experience.

This shift is seen in Generation Z's learning design submissions. In other words, tasks require moving from knowing about active learning to building a design in which it can occur. Similar patterns emerge in the canvas of research and community engagement: broad ideas are transformed into aligned questions, methods, stakeholder roles, outcomes, and review criteria Access to pedagogical ideas, peer problem-solving, and structured reflection can also increase instructors' confidence in implementing innovation (Price et al., 2021), while professional conversations can shape instructional decisions and responses to teaching challenges (Lane et al., 2022).

Table 2. Translation of ILP learning into actionable professional agency

Learning area	Proof of translation from concept to action	Emerging capabilities
Learning experience design	Authentic problems, visual microlearning, participation options, feedback, and digital resources are aligned with the intended learning.	Design learning conditions rather than relying primarily on content delivery.
Research design	The research canvas aligns the problem, objectives, questions, methods, scope, ethics, and intended contributions.	Manage investigations as an explicit and reviewable sequence of decisions.
Community engagement design	Backward design, stakeholder agency, sustainability, and the difference between outputs and outcomes are incorporated into the plan.	Planning long-term partnerships and changes from one-time activities.
AI-powered jobs	AI tools help organize transcripts and artifacts, compare patterns, language revision, search, and encoding support; Outputs are checked against the source data and the researchers' assessments.	Use digital tools to speed up the work of evidence without shifting authorship or interpretive responsibilities.
Reflective action planning	The final reflection determines the priorities, timelines, evidence, review points, and capacities that require collaboration.	Turning motivation into a self-regulated, price-worth professional action.

AI-powered workflows contribute to this translation by making comparisons and revisions systematically. Transcripts, project submissions, and reflections can be organized, searched, and reviewed across the dataset, making recurring ideas and inconsistencies more visible. AI is also emerging in professional learning content as a tool for search, language support, and coding assistance. In both uses, its role is limited: AI speeds up the handling and iteration of evidence, but verification, contextual interpretation, ethical judgment, and authorship remain the responsibility of humans. This boundary is particularly important because this study seeks to strengthen professional autonomy, rather than replace it with automated decisions.

External feedback from both collaborators provides the second part of the bridge between theory and implementation. Their questions required me to distinguish a well-designed plan from evidence of successful enforcement. For example, a learning design may demonstrate intentionality but claims about effectiveness still require evidence from revised teaching materials, classroom observations, student responses, or other evidence gathered during implementation. Likewise, a community engagement canvas can show ecosystem thinking, but sustainable outcomes need to be documented over time. Therefore, critical feedback prevents artefacts from being interpreted as self-validating achievements and diverting attention to evidence, feasibility, and iteration.

The resulting increase in confidence is based on ability rather than just motivation. Teaching, research, and community engagement remain demanding, yet seem easier to navigate as each can be approached through explicit design choices and reviewable evidence. These findings are consistent with work showing that professional agency is strengthened when development provides contextual knowledge, practical entry points, and strategies for working within institutional constraints (El-Adawy et al., 2022). The evidence in this study thus supports the

abstract central claim that conceptual insights become professionally useful when combined with design artefacts, AI-powered evidence work, and external critical feedback.

Critical Friendships, Reflective Inquiry, and Emerging Professional Autonomy

The third finding is that professional autonomy arises through a sequence of artefacts rather than through a single moment of insight. The five ILP tasks document the developmental movements of participation, intentional design, evidence-based investigation, ecosystem thinking, and finally self-organized planning. This sequence is important because it shows that autonomy does not mean working independently of others. That means becoming increasingly able to identify needs, mobilize the right resources, justify decisions, invite criticism, and evaluate consequences.

Table 3. Developments in the five ILP assignment artifacts

Assignment artifacts	Evidence seen in artifacts	Contribution to professional autonomy
Orientation reflection	A commitment to collaboration, reflection, and learning from facilitators and colleagues.	Orientation towards independent professional learning but supported by a network.
Generation Z learning design	Authentic issues, student participation, interactions, and relevant digital resources.	Design intentional learning experiences and proof of engagement.
Research canvas	Alignment of practice, theory, questions, methods, ethics, and contributions.	Evidence-based practitioner inquiry and integration of research with teaching.
Community engagement canvas	Sustainability, regeneration, the role of stakeholders, and community agencies.	Autonomy of ecosystem development and integration of academic work with social contributions.
Final reflection and individual development plan	Mission, priorities, schedules, indicators, review points, and collaboration needs.	Self-regulated career development through planned actions and evaluations.

The orientation reflection still positions me primarily as a participant seeking knowledge and collegial connections. The learning design task marks the first clear shift towards design-oriented agency, as general pedagogical principles must be adapted to the specific learning context. The research canvas expands this agency by positioning my own practice as a legitimate site of systematic inquiry. The community engagement canvas further expands the unit of analysis, from individual classrooms or research projects to networks of students, institutions, and community partners. Finally, the individual development plan translates these insights into priorities, timelines, and proposed evidence. Throughout the sequence, reflection serves as a mechanism for deciding what to retain, revise, test, and discontinue, rather than as a description of retrospective experience.

Critical friendships are crucial in interpreting these developments (Blake & Gibson, 2021; Petroelje Stolle et al., 2019; Schuck & Russell, 2005). Collaborator 1 read the artefact as evidence of a movement from enthusiasm-based beliefs to ability-based beliefs, but repeatedly asked what data would indicate enforceability and impact. Collaborator 2 emphasizes the development of networked academic identities and argues that self-direction is strengthened, not weakened, by the ability to mobilize mentors, peers, students, communities, and digital tools. The collaborator also warned that the plan's breadth could lead to overload. The practical implication is to select a limited number of interventions, apply them carefully, gather evidence, and review them repeatedly with critical peers.

These external readings also serve ethical and analytical functions. Since the primary researcher is both a participant and a translator, an insider account can easily privilege a positive experience or treat intent as an achievement. The collaborators don't just confirm the narrative; They challenge causal language, ask for evidence, and identify alternative interpretations. Their contributions help balance the emic perspective with ethical oversight and make the final account more proportionate to the available data. Evidence-based professional conversations and post-observational dialogue are also associated with adaptive practices and the development of reflective skills (Bhagwandhin et al., 2025; Martin et al., 2022).

Therefore, the data show the transition along the beginner-to-expert continuum, not the completion of that transition. The strongest evidence is the development of mechanisms related to professional autonomy: the ability to design learning experiences, articulate the reasons for decisions, use AI and other tools critically, connect teaching with research and community engagement, gather evidence, and revise practice through collaborative

inquiry. Observable class effects, research findings, and community outcomes remain necessary to support stronger claims of sustained expertise.

Together, these findings support an evidence-based model of early career professional autonomy with four mutually reinforcing elements: structured opportunities relevant to the lecturer's career stage; self-directed contextual design artefact production; AI-powered but human-regulated proof-of-work; and critical friendships that connect reflection with external scrutiny. Therefore, empowerment in learning design is more than just acquiring techniques. It is an emerging capacity to design, enforce, examine, and improve academic practice through collaborative and critical investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

This preliminary study concludes that the development of independent professions can strengthen early-career lecturers' capacity to design, reflect on, and progressively improve their professional practice when supported by structured learning, critical friendships, and systematic analysis. Participation in the 2026 ILP provides a relevant conceptual framework and practical tools for integrating teaching, research, and community engagement, while the program's five artefacts document the emerging shift from passive participation toward more intentional learning designs, evidence-based inquiry, and self-directed career development. The use of collaborative self-study allows the principal investigator to examine professional growth from an insider's perspective, while a critical peer ethics review helps question assumptions and claims of moderate improvement and distinguish perceived confidence from demonstrated change. AI-powered thematic analysis further aids the organisation and comparison of transcripts, artefacts, and reflections, although interpretation and authorship remain the researchers' responsibility. Overall, the findings suggest that professional autonomy is not developed through isolated reflection or skill acquisition alone, but through the iterative process of designing actions, gathering evidence, receiving critical feedback, and revising practice. Because this research is preliminary, its strongest contribution is evidence of emerging professional agency rather than evidence of continuous transformation or expert performance.

The future stage of research should go beyond reflective accounts and completed tasks by gathering direct evidence of implementation and outcomes, including revised teaching materials, classroom observations, student feedback, learning engagement data, research outcomes, and documented community engagement outcomes. Individual development plans should be implemented selectively, with a limited number of priority interventions reviewed periodically with two essential friends to avoid overload and support continuous improvement. Long-term follow-up is also recommended to examine whether the capabilities identified in these early phases remain stable, develop further, or change in response to institutional opportunities and constraints. For greater methodological credibility, future analysis could include a clearer audit trail of coding decisions, systematic comparisons between emic and ethical interpretations, and transparent documentation of how AI tools contribute to data organizations without replacing the researchers' judgment. Lecturer development programs may also adopt a similar approach by incorporating reflective artefacts, peer critique, action planning, and post-program evaluation rather than ending professional learning when training activities are completed. In practical terms, early-career lecturers are encouraged to treat professional development as an ongoing cycle of self-inquiry in which they identify needs, design actions, gather evidence, discuss the results with trusted critical peers, and revise their practice accordingly.

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