Using regulated qualifications to introduce learners to AI at Level two

Barnsley College

gateway qualifications

LEARNER OF THE YEAR
FAB 2024 AWARDS
AWARD WINNER

QUALIFICATION OF THE YEAR
FAB 2024 AWARDS
AWARD WINNER
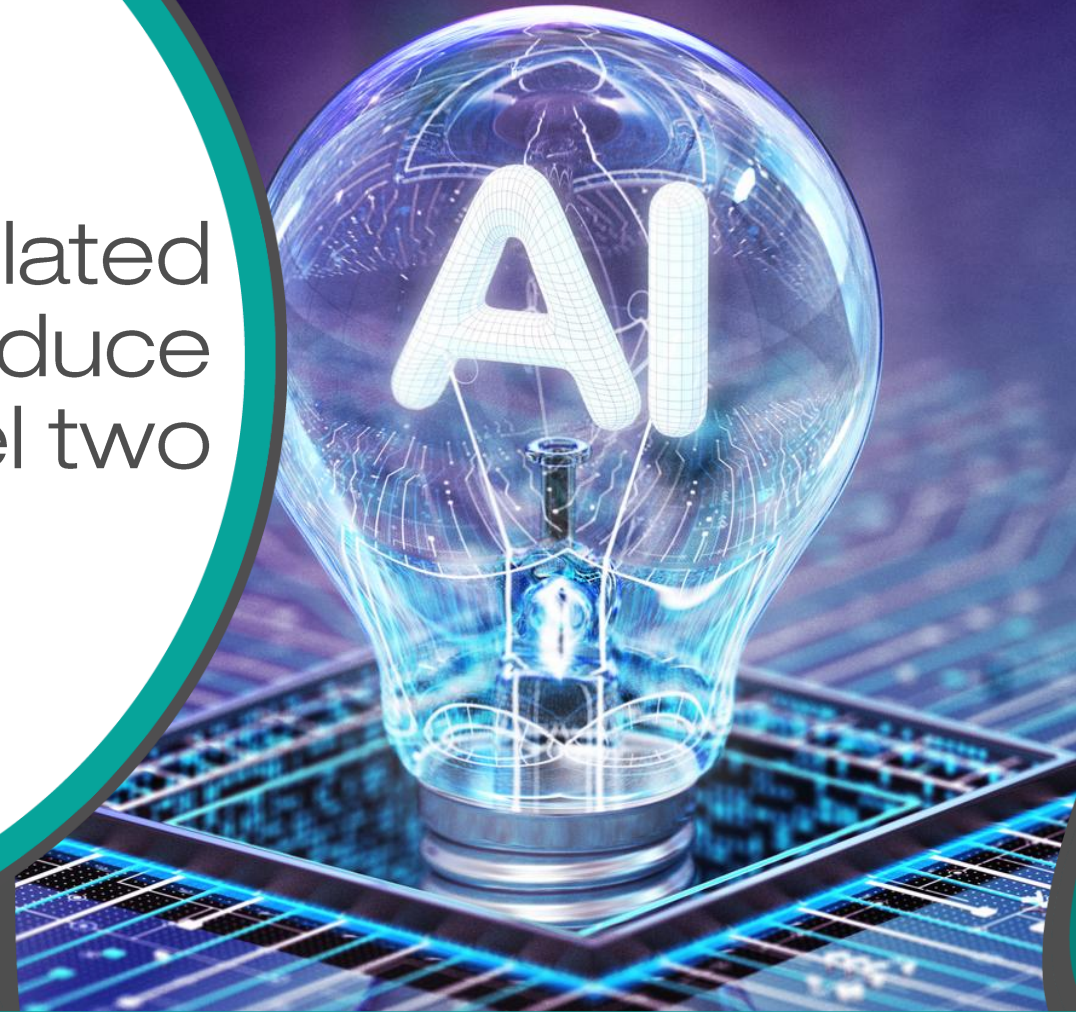
AI

Empowering Learners with AI

INTRODUCTION TO AI

What it is and why should we care?

- The ability for computer systems to perform tasks that simulate human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

- The global AI market is worth almost **$400 billion**.

- **83%** of companies claim that AI is a top priority in their business plans

- In December 2024 OpenAI announced that ChatGPT was managing over **1 billion** messages daily.

https://explodingtopics.com/blog/ai-statistics

Purpose, Design and Drive

What we aim to cover in the duration of this session

Designing a future ready course in AI

Our delivery journey

What next for AI and Education?

Session Objectives

Throughout this session we aim to cover the details of;

- An Introduction to AI and our goals

- How we designed our course

- AI tools in action in the classroom environment

- Impact and outcome
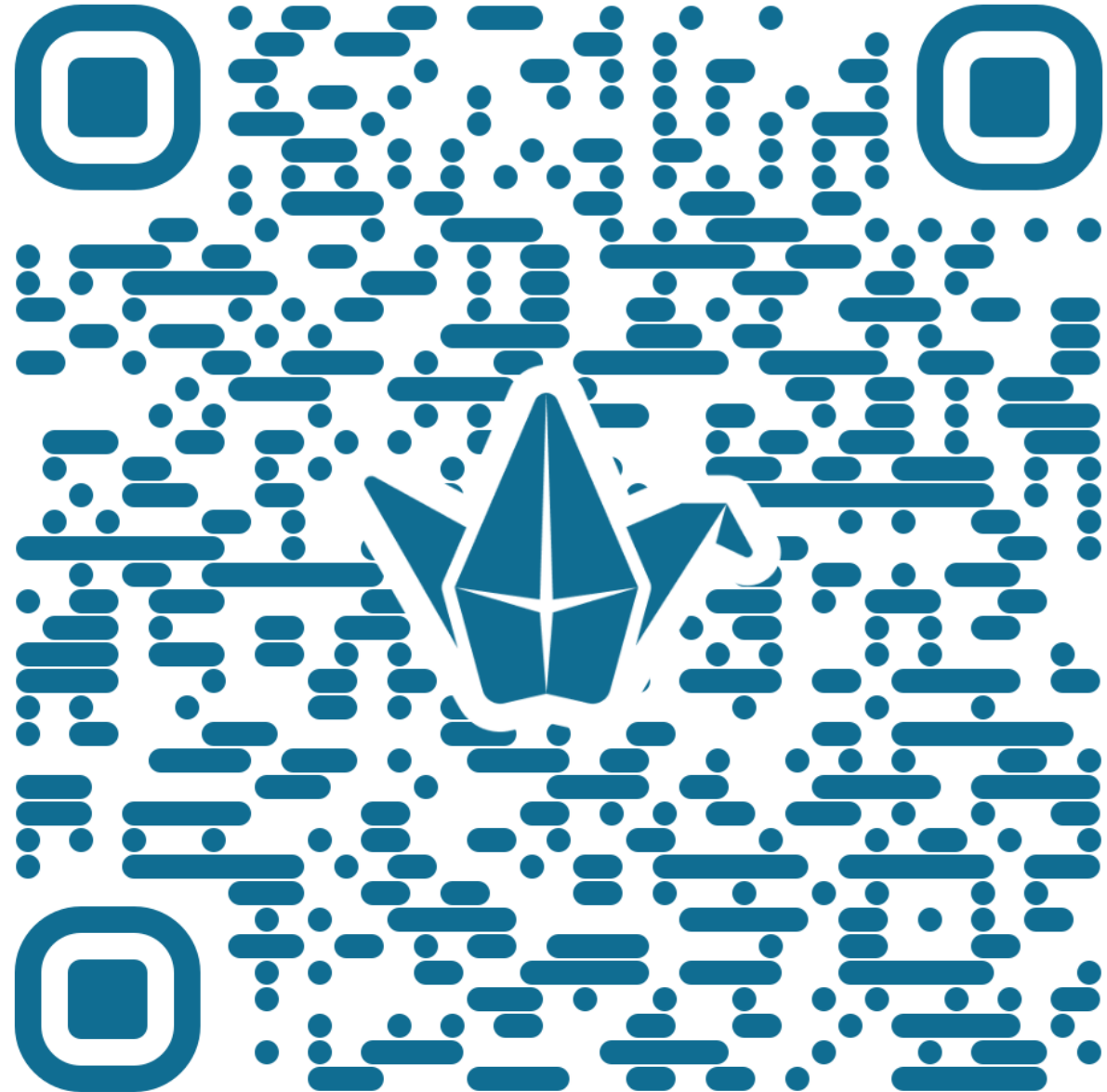
- Lessons learnt and outcomes

- Q&A

Daniel Wright

- Barnsley College

- Programme Manager Digital & Creative

- Adult and Higher Education

- Oversee all courses in this area for learner 19+

- Levels 1 - 5

- Background in Digital Media

Padlet

Who uses AI – why, what for. And if not, for what reason?

So why AI?

Current Market

- Around one in six UK organisations, totalling 432,000, have embraced at least one AI technology, according to government research

- [(AI) Statistics And Trends In 2025 – Forbes Advisor UK](#)

Digital Literacy & Jobs

- According to GOV.UK research around a quarter of the UK population have the lowest level of digital capability, meaning they are likely to struggle to use online services

- February 2025 - [Digital Inclusion Action Plan: First Steps - GOV.UK](#)

It's not about computing as an area.

Of the 40+ learners, and internal staff development, we have delivered our course too, less than 20% of them were from computing as a background or progressing from/on to a computing pathway.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL:
DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING & SOCIAL MOBILITY

Findings include insights from polls of **490 businesses** and **1,979 working age adults** across England and Scotland as well as interviews with training providers, employers, policy makers and commissioners

L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

Generation

THE DEMAND FOR DIGITAL/TECH SKILLS

49%

Half of employers (49%) are unable to recruit workers with the digital/tech skills that they need.

When employers hire to digital tech/jobs they mainly use traditional routes and so miss out on diverse talent e.g. women, ethnic minorities, non-degree holders and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are significantly under-represented in tech jobs.
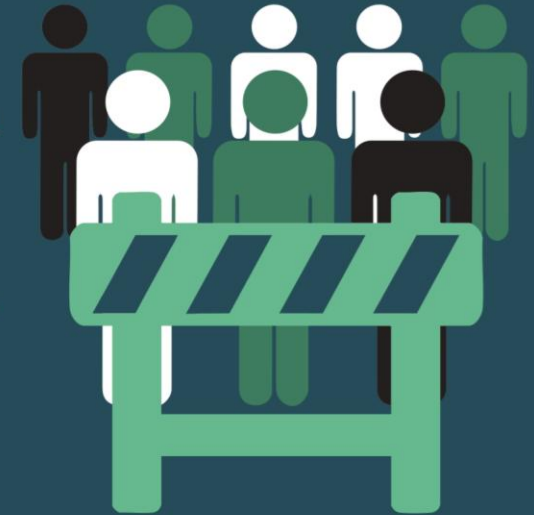
Most **recruits to digital/tech roles are degree educated.**

7 in 10 workers in tech occupations have a HE qualification

Compared to **4 in 10** of those in non-tech roles.

BREAKING INTO THE DIGITAL/TECH SECTOR

37%

Just **37%** of adults in lower-socioeconomic groups say that jobs requiring advanced digital/tech skills are a realistic option for them.

Why do learners need this?

Bridging the Gap

My focus area is 19+ but this is relevant for 16-18 too

AI can help open up new skills for job demand

Education leads into industry and learners need to be ready

Learning AI is not just 1 digital skill, AI can then support with other digital skills

Education is always outpaced; this can help us to keep up

The Course;
Level 2 Digital and IT Skills –
Gateway Qualifications

So how are we attempting to do this and what did Gateway have to offer?

They had the right courses, and they supported the idea for the pathway.

Emerging Technologies

Our goal was to align with real world application

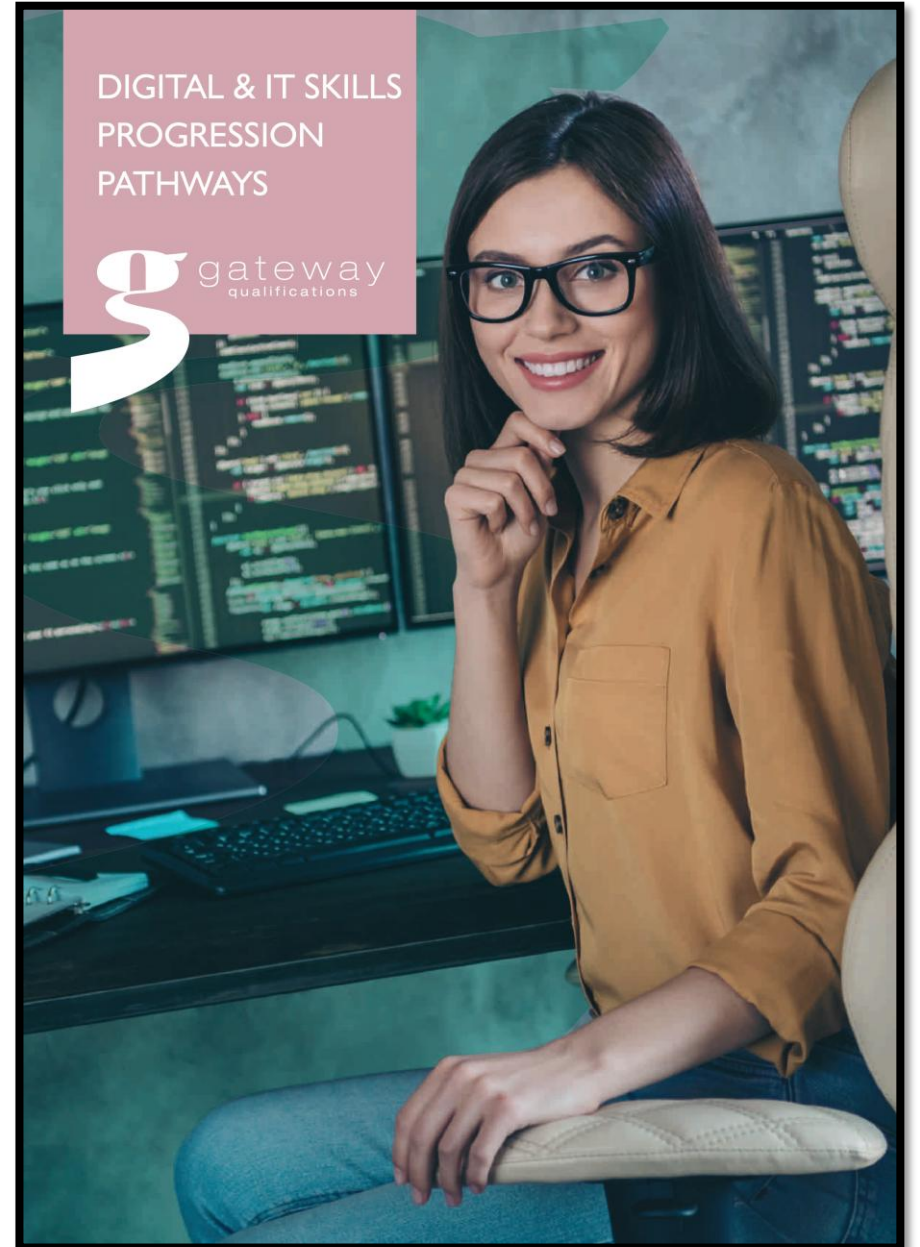This flexible and open-ended unit allowed for course design and structure

We worked outwards from this unit to match other aligning units

- Level 2 Certificate unit pathways;

1. Exploring New and Emerging Technologies
2. Using Digital Technologies
3. Digital Skills Project
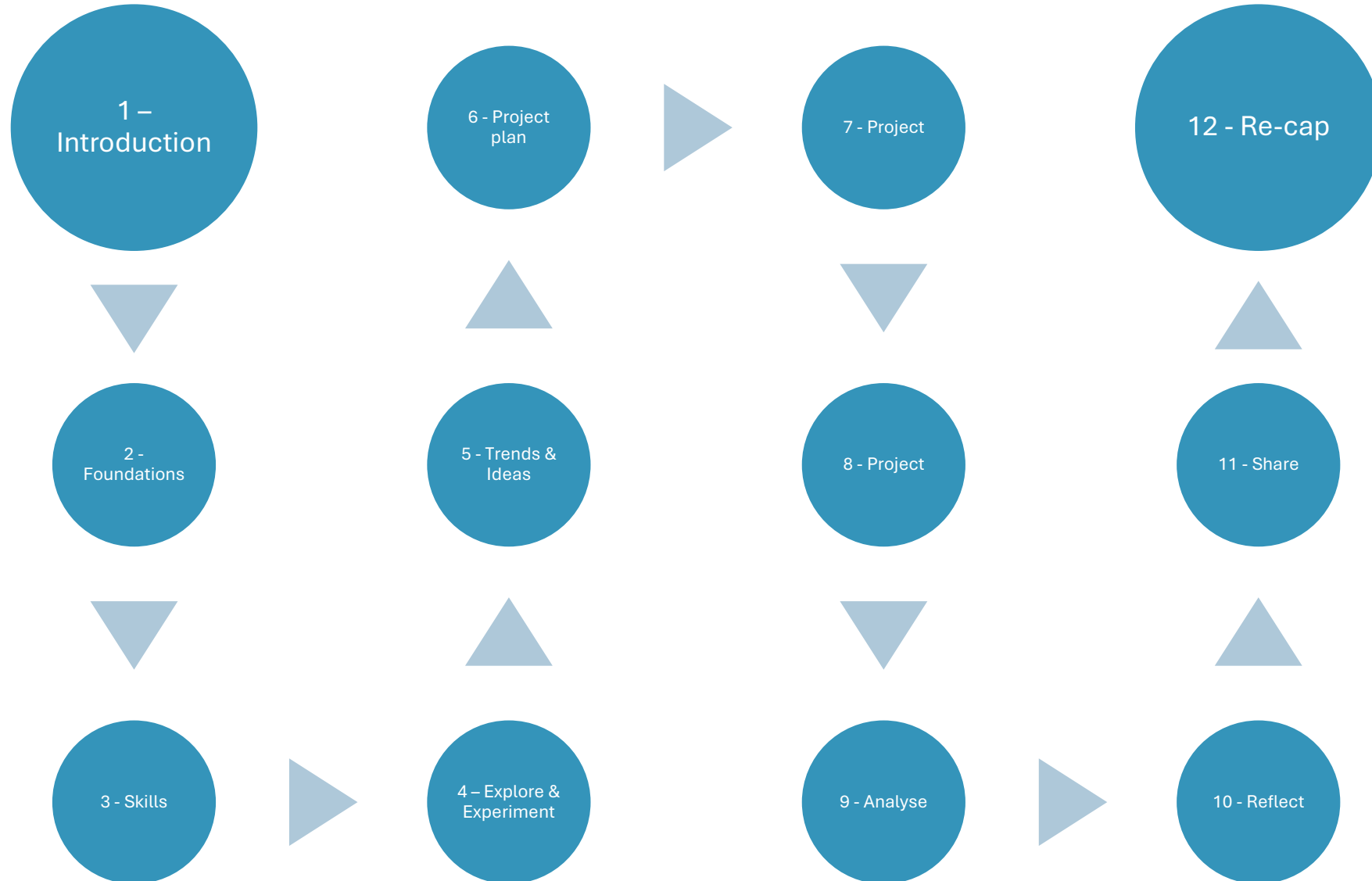4. Digital Skills Career Progression

What we created; Level 2 Introduction to A.I

- A 12-week course
- Delivered part time to adult (19+) learners
- Certificate qualification

- Follows an 'Explore, Experiment, Explain, Apply' approach
- All course work based built from the Digital & IT Skills Level 2 qualification units.

DIGITAL & IT SKILLS PROGRESSION PATHWAYS

gateway
qualifications

Our Delivery Format

What does our brief look like?

| Scenario | You have been hired by a company as their managing director of administration.

The role you have been hired for is to create a series of documents for that business. The company will use these standardised documents moving forward to centralise their administration and become uniformed and consistent across the company. Their overall goal is to minimise increased staff workload.

You will use A.I to help generate ideas for documents that can be created and used for this business. Then use A.I to help plan and design for the development of and creation of these documents showcasing with examples how they are to be completed by staff.

You must create between 6-10 documents for the company. These must be edited/formatted correctly after creation within A.I.

The company and type of business is your choice based upon planning and research into the sector as part of the course and use of A.I.

Your documents produced must vary in what they are and format. You will evidence all planning, use of prompts to design these templates and present them at the end of the course.

Throughout the project you will also evidence work and use of A.I through screenshots, documents, and your production log. |
|---|---|

- We have 7 overall assignments
- These build up from explore and experiment
- To explain and apply
- Each session we look at new AI technologies and how to apply it
- We spend time on a project built around a scenario

A focus on how we apply this in teaching

Prompt engineering and experimentation

Real-world scenarios and tasks

Gamification

Challenges set using AI

Person use outside of work

The AI we Use/Explore

Primarily we use ChatGPT, Co-Pilot and Gemini

These are easy and free to access within college

We also explore

- Other Chat generators

- Image generators

- Sound Generators

- Video Generators

- Purpose built AI tools (NotebookLM)

How do we start with AI for our students

We ask our students on the course to use AI in the first session, we look at how they use it, the results they get and what they are asking it. We found a lot would use it like a search engine – too much to the point and direct.

What we cover and why

Understanding it's a tool
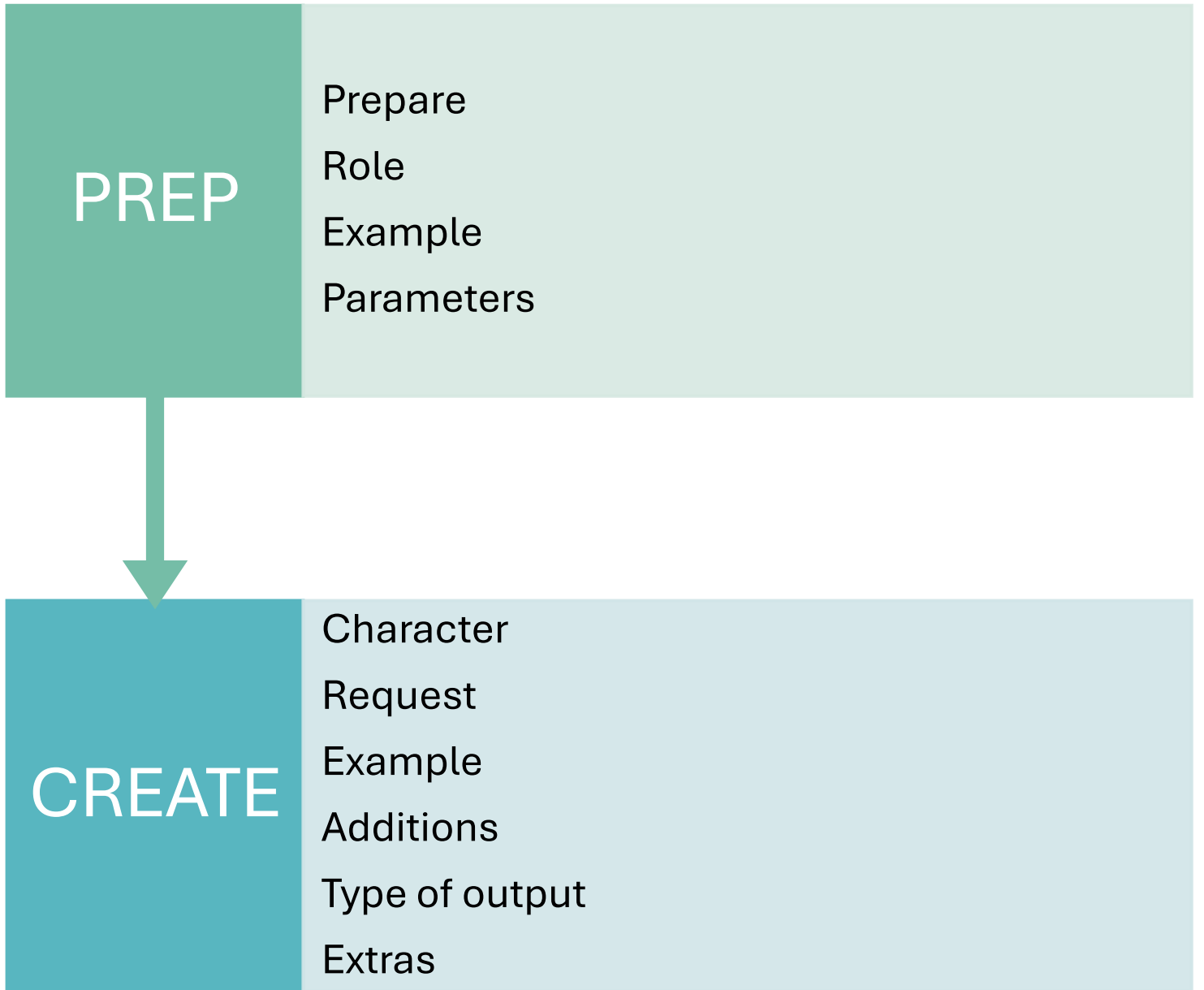
This is at the core of what we deliver

Learn to use it as a tool to improve what you do with it in the future

We also cover the basics of where and how AI has come about as part of the course

Helping our learner to understand more about what it is and how it works

Using AI as a tool in classes

PREP	
	Prepare
	Role
	Example
	Parameters

CREATE	
	Character
	Request
	Example
	Additions
	Type of output
	Extras

How are we able to get this through IQA/EQA?

It's about the learning and the journey not the AI output

Being able to use AI effectively to meet the needs of our vocational scenario set within the project is what we mark

Use of the AI effectively is evidence that learning has taken place, students show an understanding of how to use this tool

We evidence this part with production logs

What outcomes have we seen so far...

Just over a year delivering the course and 4 cohorts of learners later.

What has been the impact?

- We have now delivered this course to over 40+ adult learners.

- Additional soft and technical skills to include on CV

- We have also run this course for a department within college to train staff.

- Staff noticed some tasks and workload was lightened with AI support
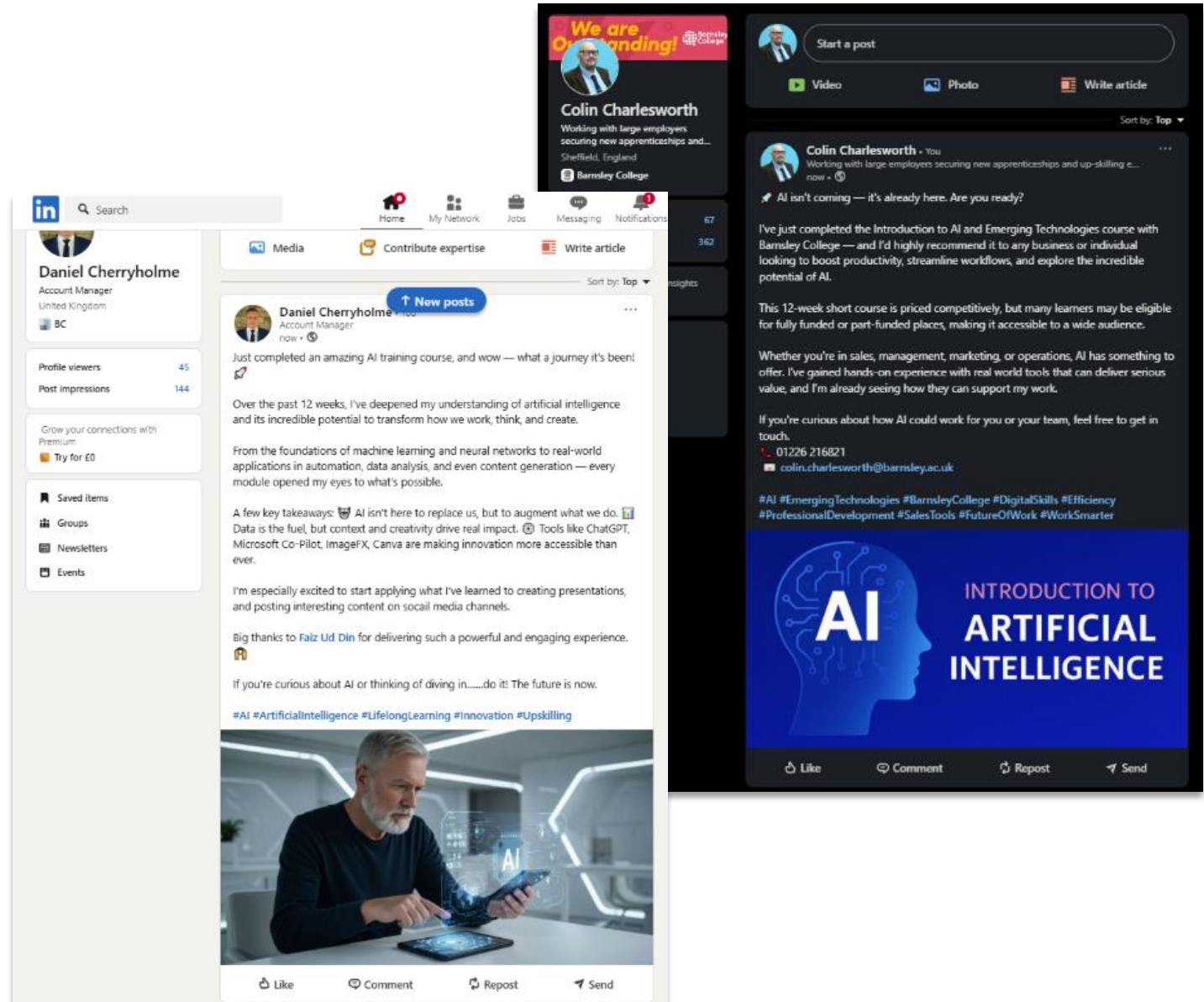
"I didn't know A.I could be used in that way"

"I'm glad I did the course, it's helped me with more than just knowing how to use A.I as I was never that confident with computers"

"I have been able to set up a personal GCSE maths tutor for my son who now uses it 2-3 times a week to revise"

"This is going to streamline how I connect with clients as I can use it to draft documents much faster tailored to each new client"

"I use this daily to support with smaller tasks, it's like delegating the simple tasks to someone else one I've set it up"

What have we taken away from this

With technology moving forward at such pace, it is something that people need to be taught how to use

That being flexible with the scenario is crucial as each cohort has different needs

The core course content remains the same

Learning needs to be hands on

It has been about breaking the misconceptions of AI ("It's going to take my job")

So, what next?

We will continue to develop our current course working with Gateway

We aim to share our practice with other colleges and institutions

We will monitor how our completed learners are applying their new skills and to what extent

We hope to expand the course and provide more pathways and levels for this area

Final thoughts to take away

AI in education still has a long way to go and there are still so many uncurtains

It is a tool and like every other tool, people should still learn how to use it effectively

It isn't going away anytime soon, the sooner we can adapt to work with it the better we can help others

Thank you

Please share any thoughts or questions or may have.

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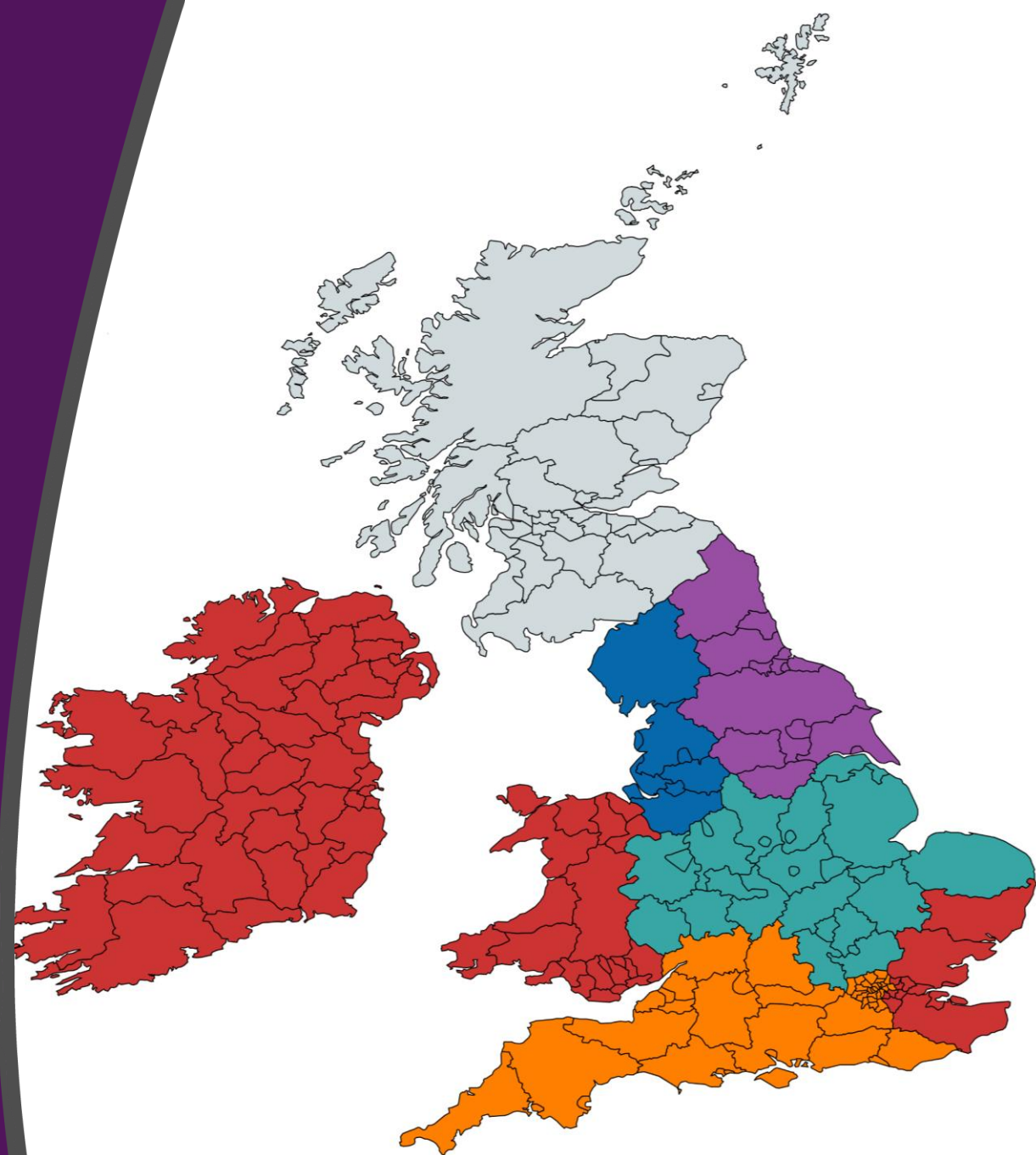E: Rory.Munro@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
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