

Supercharging Learning and Collaboration with GenAI

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COMM 357 – Interpersonal Skills for Managers

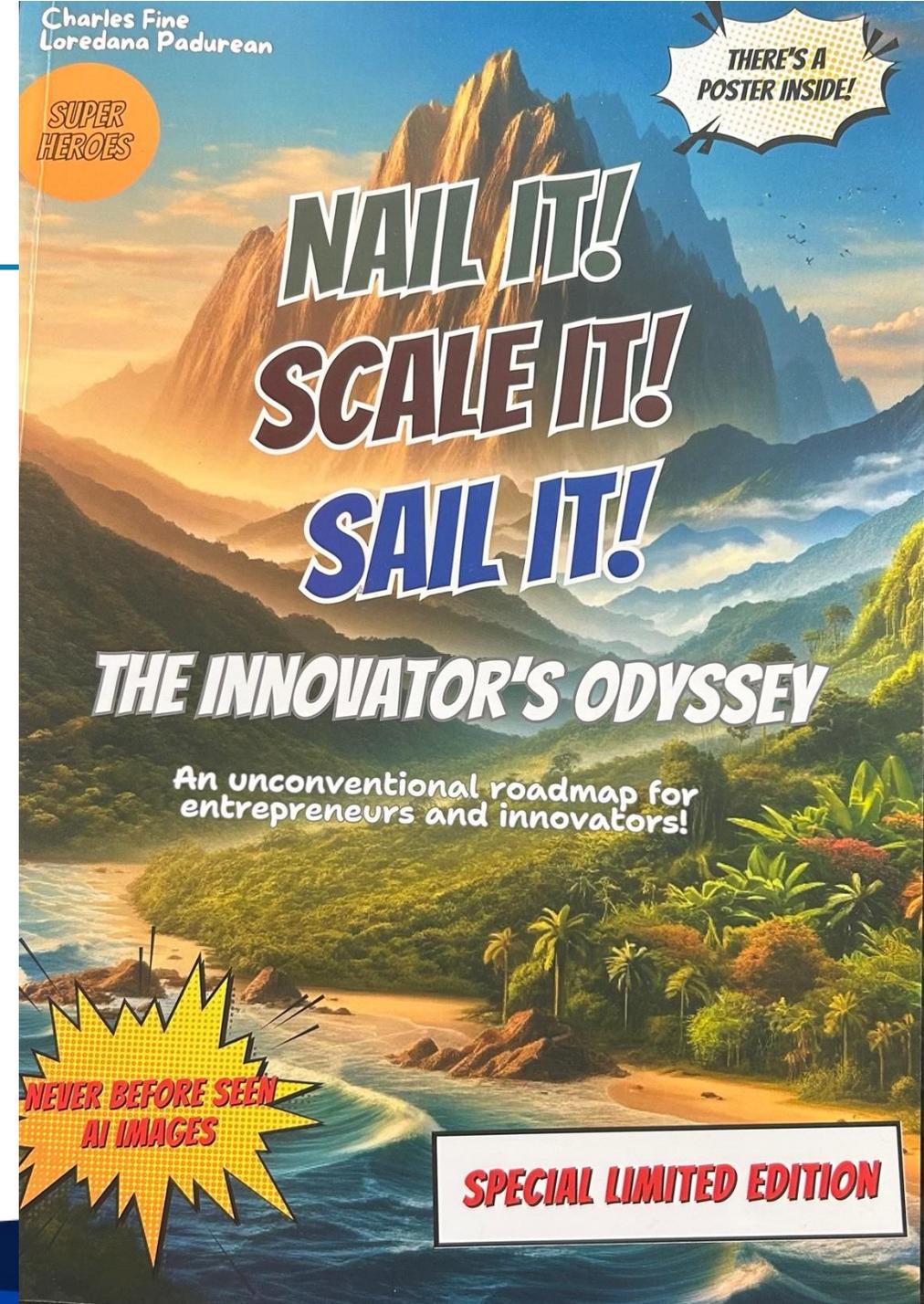
- Enrollment includes students in their third or fourth year of study in Commerce, Engineering, Health Sciences, Education or Arts & Science
- Counts towards the Certificate in Social Impact
- Students develop interpersonal skills crucial to any manager's role, including self-awareness, stress and time management, creativity and problem-solving, and conflict management.

Observed Challenges with Student Engagement

- Poor attendance
- Shorter attention spans
- Focus on memorization of the course content versus deeper reflection on and interaction with concepts
- Group work used to divide tasks versus collaboration
- Students use AI without understanding bias and limitations
- Increasing percentage of neurosparkly students

AOM 2024 - Keynote

- Dr. Loredana Padurean, Northeastern/MIT and her work co-creating a textbook
- Picture superiority effect, where the brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, and better retains visual information
- AI as a needed skill – *AI only replaces those who do less than the AI*



Can we replicate her success?

Pilot in US, UK, Australia, and Canada

The Plan

- Divide the undergrad class into groups of ~5
- Challenge them to develop a story depicting management skills (e.g., communication or resilience) selected by the group
- Provide in-class time and support to groups – this is a novel task
- Add an element of peer feedback by requiring groups to give feedback on other publications using *the 2 stars and a wish* method
- Assessment was based on the clarity of the depiction of skills - What are they? Why are they important? How do we develop them?

Supporting Rationale

- Supports active learning
- Utilizes technology to enhance teaching and learning
- Includes group work and peer assessment
- Fosters a sense of community within the classroom, where students feel safe to take risks, share ideas, and learn from each other.
- Connects learning to real-world contexts and applications

Supporting Rationale

- Allows for personalized learning experiences and adaptation to meet student needs and learning styles
- Supports inquiry-based learning by encouraging students to ask questions, explore ideas, and investigate problems
- Students are given more autonomy in determining their learning goals and exploring topics of interest
- Constructivist - students construct an understanding through experience and reflection that are meaningful and relevant

Why Comic Books?

Creativity and student engagement

**Incorporation of AI Tools
in a controlled, creative
context.**

**Visual Learning:
visual + textual elements**

**Demonstration
and deep
understanding of
the subject matter**

**Simplifying Complex
Information**

Broad Appeal

**Innovation in Education:
push the boundaries of
traditional academic.**

Why Generative AI ?



**Requires high level
of critical thinking.**

**It's a fun and
collaborative method.**

**To demystify and reduce intimidation
and demonstrate practical benefits.**

**Timing and industry
relevant.**

**Addresses attention
issues.**

The Results?



GIULIA'S COMPASS

NAVIGATING DOUBTS, FIRE & FREEDOM



Adobe

 hachette
LIVRE

HAZELNUT MANAGEMENT

Juliette and her squirrel coach



chies
Microsoft W



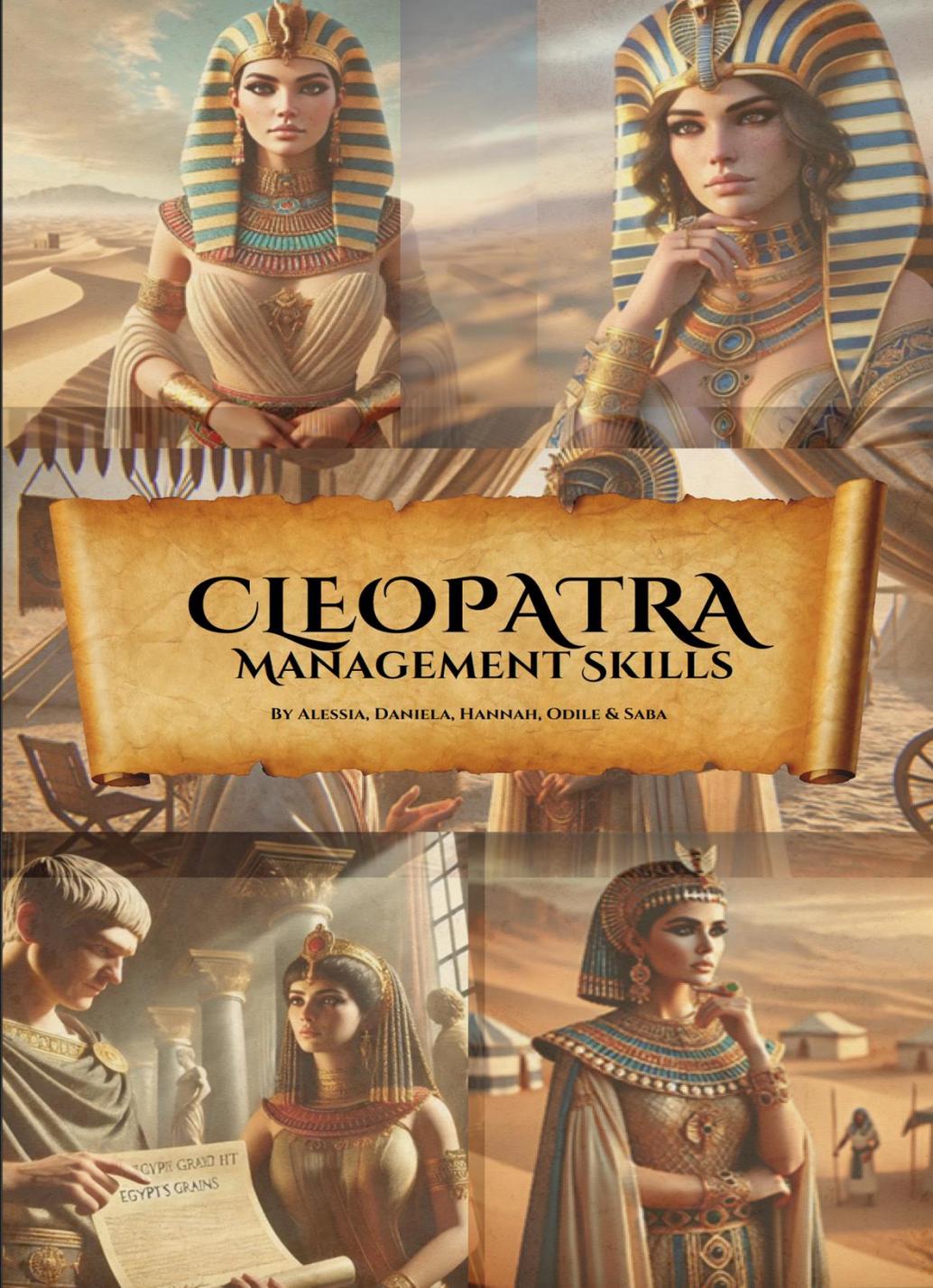
FOREST OF REFLECTION



TO LEAD A HERD

A RARE RHINO. A TOUGHER TRUTH. A TEAM FINDS ITS WAY.





CLEOPATRA
MANAGEMENT SKILLS
BY ALESSIA, DANIELA, HANNAH, ODILE & SABA



THE
SWEET
SHIFT



THE WORLD WATCHES AS FOUR HOCKEY POWERHOUSES COMPETE FOR GLORY IN THE 4 NATIONS FACEOFF. TENSIONS ARE HIGH, BUT LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK AND TASK DELEGATION WILL DETERMINE THE TRUE CHAMPION.



Canadian Data

Attendance across 4 sections averaged **over 90%** (including an 8:30am Monday class!)

In-class discussions were exceptionally robust and thoughtful

Using a 7-point Likert scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), students were asked to rate each of the following statements about the use of generative AI.

	Mean Fall 2024	Mean Winter 2025
How much academic learning do you think you retain normally?	4.33	4.4
How much academic learning do you think you retained in this project?	4.84	5
Do you feel using AI increased your connection with the material covered in this project?	5.6	6.17
Do you feel using AI decreased your connection with the material covered in this project?	2.36	2.33

Canadian Data

Using a 7-point Likert scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), students were asked to rate each of the following statements about the use of generative AI.

	Start of Winter Term Mean	End of Winter Term Mean
I am comfortable using AI for learning.	6.4	6.5
I'm motivated to use AI for learning.	6.44	6.83
I feel AI can enhance my learning.	3.16	6.33
AI can support my critical thinking skills.	4.6	6.33
I find it impressive how much AI can do for me.	6.72	6.5
I find AI intimidating.	3.16	2.5
I believe AI helps me engage with academic learning.	5.96	6.83
I believe AI helps me retain academic learning.	5.16	6.17
I know exactly how to use AI ethically in an academic learning environment.	4.92	5

Key Takeaways – Supercharging Learning and Collaboration

- **Reduced intimidation by AI** – students were more questioning, more critical, more transparent about using AI and showed increased recognition of what AI gets wrong!
- **Engagement** – offering a creative, flexible, and future-facing approach to learning, and inviting students to experiment, collaborate, and bring their ideas to life through storytelling and AI fostered a deeper emotional and intellectual investment

Key Takeaways – Supercharging Learning and Collaboration

- **Collaboration** – a deeper level of teamwork observed, students found frequent communication, collective problem-solving, and shared creative decision-making were required throughout the project
- **Increased comprehension and retention** – students reported a deeper and more lasting understanding of key concepts and neurosparkly students were especially vocal about the benefits of this type of learning activity



SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY MEMBERS CONSIDERING THE INCORPORATION OF AI IN THEIR CLASSROOMS:

01 Embrace Experimentation:
Encourage a culture of trial and error. AI in education is still evolving, and there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Allow students the freedom to explore, iterate, and learn from their interactions with AI.

02 Integration Over Replacement:
Highlight AI as a tool to augment learning rather than replace traditional methods. It should be viewed as a complement that enhances understanding and skills, not as a complete substitute.

03 Focus on Critical Thinking:
Use AI to foster open-ended discussions and critical examinations. Given that AI can handle repetitive tasks, students can then focus on deeper, analytical challenges, boosting their critical thinking capacities.

04 Promote Collaboration:
Design AI-integrated projects in ways that encourage students to collaborate. When used effectively, AI can amplify peer interaction, mutual learning, and group problem-solving.

05 Training & Continuous Learning:
Stay updated with the latest advancements in AI. Consider attending workshops, webinars, or courses that offer training in AI tools relevant to education. This will ensure you're utilizing the technology to its fullest potential.

06 Ethical Considerations:
Introduce discussions about the ethical implications of AI, including data privacy, biases, and responsible AI usage. This will make students aware of the broader societal impacts and responsibilities tied to AI applications.

07 Shift from Memorization to Application:
Utilize AI tools to move beyond rote learning. With AI handling information retrieval, students can focus more on creative applications, synthesis, and real-world problem-solving.

08 Re-evaluate Assessment Methods:
With the integration of AI, traditional assessment methods might need revision. Develop new evaluation methods that account for AI's role while ensuring the authenticity of student work.

09 Highlight Real-world Relevance:
Connect AI projects and assignments to real-world scenarios. This not only makes learning more engaging but also prepares students for practical challenges in their future careers.

10 Highlight collaboration:
Design AI-integrated projects in ways that encourage students to collaborate. When used effectively, AI can amplify peer interaction, mutual learning, and group problem-solving.

11 Seek Feedback:
Periodically gather feedback from students about their experiences with AI in the classroom. Their insights can offer valuable pointers for refining your teaching approach.

12 Be Enthusiastic while Patient and Adaptive:
Remember that both you and your students might face a learning curve when dealing with AI. Patience, perseverance, enthusiasm and adaptability will be crucial for a smooth and effective integration.



Combining a number of ideas and strategies from multiple different academic resources into a singular plotline enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts. It was like a simulated opportunity to apply the complex concepts.

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**Student
COMM 357
Fall 2024**



I feel that because there wasn't such rigid walls as to what we had to do, or such limitations on the ideas we could bring to the table, and I feel that was really important for our group because the project was genuinely fun to make and put together and plan. I think a lot of other classes could learn from this.

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**Student
COMM 357
Winter 2025**



Working with AI-generated images required a lot more teamwork than we expected, there was a lot of trial and error with prompts and we quickly realized we would not be able to simply separate the work and complete it ourselves. We had to coordinate timelines, trust one another to contribute quality work, and adapt together as the story, characters and image designs evolved. The project really asked us to create a dynamic where we were able to offer and receive feedback and have mutual trust...

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**Student
COMM 357
Winter 2025**

So how can you do this?

Key Steps

- **Start Early** – image creation and learning about prompt engineering is new to most students, and it takes a lot of time
- **Tool Agnosticism** – let students select their tool of choice (e.g., ChatGPT, Canva, Image.ai, Runway, Midjourney, Gemini, etc...)
- **Focus on the Storytelling** – although image creation is the medium, the content of the comic is the key deliverable
- **Encourage Peer Involvement & Reflection** – students are motivated by and get a sense of pride from reflecting on and sharing their work
- **Allow Organic Learning About Bias in AI** – more effective to let students discover and discuss bias and shortcomings

How to Start the Dialogue Around the Limitations of and Bias in AI?

Create an Image of Firefighters



Create an Image of Firefighters Off Duty



What if We Ask for Increased Diversity or LGBT?





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