



Carsten Holz
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You do not have this authority -- Re: Mandatory Professional Development Courses on AI and Education

Carsten A. Holz <socholz@ust.hk>

Tue, Sep 24, 2024 at 8:11 AM

To: Office of the Provost <provost@ust.hk>

Cc: Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Dear Professor Guo / staff in the provost's office,

Thank you for your response of 19 September 2024.

My email to you of 16 September 2024 made two arguments, one about academic freedom and one about professional norms. I read nothing in your email that addresses, let alone refutes my argument on academic freedom. I read nothing in your email that shows mandatory courses and quizzes on teaching technologies--that a manager believes in--to be the norm at world-class universities.

Your email continues to present your beliefs. It is your belief of what constitutes quality that you impose on me ("ensur[ing] quality assurance"), your belief of what are "current and effective" "educational practices," your belief of what constitutes "essential knowledge," your belief of what it takes to "accurately assess learning outcomes," and your belief of AI literacy being "increasingly instrumental for maintaining the quality [...] of our teaching practices." I hear your beliefs. And, as I said before, you have no authority to turn your beliefs into mandatory courses/quizzes on teaching.

We are not having a "constructive dialogue." At best, we are talking past each other.

You attribute this "initiative" to HKUST's Center for Education Innovation. I welcome what the CEI has to offer. I don't mind the CEI pushing what it has to offer, But 'mandatory' and 'testing' is a transgression of academic freedom and professional norms. Since when does a non-academic unit--which, furthermore, promotes a mechanistic, teaching mono culture (presumably its mission ["innovation"])—rule over those who exercise their academic profession?

I can recommend F.A. Hayek's writings on the 'wisdom' of centralized 'knowledge.' He received the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel for rubbishing that notion.

In a very different matter, I do not question the relevance of AI for academic teaching and research. See, for example, my communication with a colleague, at <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative/2024-9-17-CH-response-to-colleague-re-mandatoryAICourses.pdf>. I would be interested in learning more about AI from a qualified source (which includes the CEI), I am not willing to condone breaches of academic freedom and professional norms.

If I may share your email with colleagues on my personal homepage, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Carsten