

AI PROMPTS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS

Using AI to strengthen learning design thinking, reflection, experimentation, and capability development.



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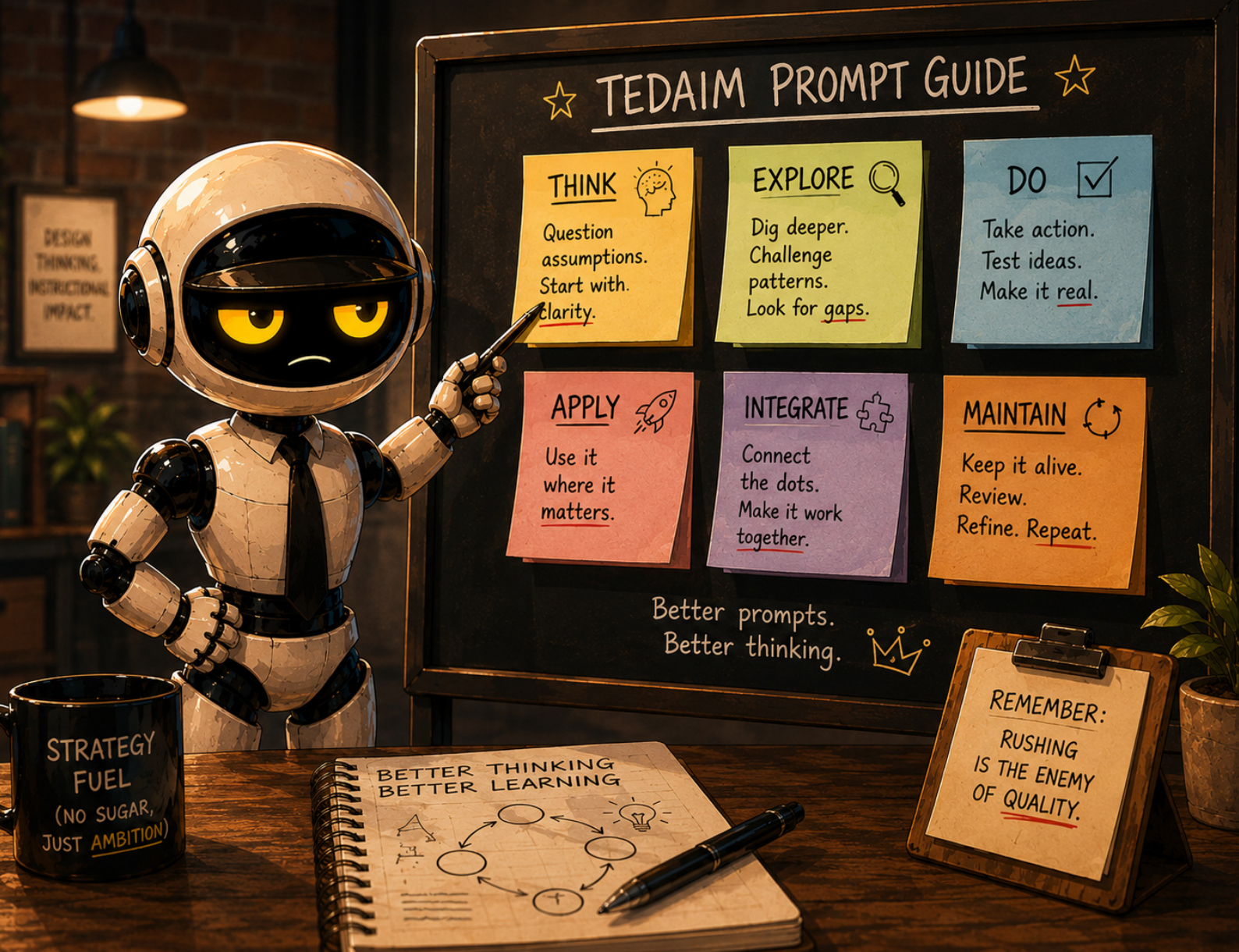


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PREFACE



Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of the instructional design conversation, yet many learning professionals still find themselves caught between excitement, scepticism, curiosity, pressure, and an overwhelming amount of conflicting advice. Some are experimenting confidently, others are cautiously observing from the sidelines, and many are quietly wondering whether they are already behind. In the middle of all this noise, it becomes quite easy to mistake prompting for thinking, speed for quality, and content production for meaningful learning design. This guide was created to slow the conversation down slightly and encourage a more thoughtful approach to how AI can support instructional design practice.

The prompts in this guide are not intended to function as shortcuts, replacements for expertise, or “magic commands” that instantly produce excellent learning solutions. Instead, they are structured exploration tools designed to help instructional designers think more clearly, investigate learner reality more deeply, challenge assumptions more rigorously, and engage more intentionally with capability development. Using a TEDAIM-informed approach — Think, Explore, Do, Apply, Integrate, Maintain — this guide encourages experimentation, reflection, adaptation, and critical judgement. AI can accelerate many parts of the design process, but meaningful learning still depends on human insight, ethical thinking, contextual awareness, and the willingness to keep refining the work long after the first draft feels finished.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional designers are entering a fascinating period of change.

AI is not simply accelerating content production. It is reshaping how many of us think about learning design itself.

For years, instructional design has involved balancing business pressure, learner reality, capability development, stakeholder expectations, behavioural change, and operational constraints — usually while someone asks whether the module can “just be shorter and more engaging.”

AI does not remove those tensions.

If anything, it exposes them faster.

That is why this guide does not present prompts as shortcuts or magic solutions. A good prompt cannot replace professional judgement, contextual awareness, learner empathy, ethical thinking, or real instructional expertise.

What prompts can do is help instructional designers:

- interrogate assumptions,
- structure thinking,
- explore alternatives,
- pressure-test ideas,
- accelerate iteration,
- and uncover blind spots.

**BECAUSE THE REAL VALUE
IS NOT THE PROMPT ITSELF
IT IS THE QUALITY OF THINKING
BEHIND THE PROMPT**

This guide uses a TEDAIM-informed approach:
Think, Explore, Do, Apply, Integrate, Maintain.

Not as a rigid formula, but as a structured way of exploring how learning moves from awareness into sustainable capability.

- Use these prompts critically.
- Adapt them freely.
- Challenge the outputs.
- Disagree with the AI.
- Refine relentlessly.



THINK

STAGE PURPOSE

THINK focuses on clarifying the real problem before rushing toward content production.

Many learning interventions fail because the organisation requests training before properly understanding:

- the performance issue,
- the capability gap,
- the environmental pressure,
- or whether learning is even the correct solution.

AI can help instructional designers interrogate these assumptions more systematically.

PROMPT BLOCK

ACT AS an experienced instructional designer and performance consultant.

Help me analyse whether the following issue is genuinely a learning problem, a process problem, a management problem, a communication issue, a systems issue, or a combination of factors.

Context:

[INSERT CONTEXT]

Current organisational concern:

[INSERT BUSINESS PROBLEM]

Observed learner or staff behaviour:

[INSERT OBSERVATIONS]

Potential risks or consequences:

[INSERT RISKS]



Identify

- root causes
- assumptions
- missing information
- stakeholder blind spots
- and questions that should be investigated before designing training.



Reflection

AI often identifies patterns quickly, but it may oversimplify complex organisational realities. Use outputs as investigative starting points, not definitive diagnoses.



EXPLORE

STAGE PURPOSE

EXPLORE focuses on understanding learner context, emotional reality, workplace constraints, motivation, prior knowledge, and application conditions.

Good instructional design respects complexity instead of pretending learners exist in ideal conditions.

PROMPT BLOCK

Help me analyse the learning environment and learner reality for the following audience:

[LEARNER GROUP]

The workplace or operational environment includes:

[WORKPLACE CONTEXT]

Learners currently struggle with:

[LEARNER CHALLENGES]



Investigate

- possible emotional barriers,
- workload pressures,
- motivation issues,
- environmental obstacles,
- learner misconceptions,
- confidence gaps,
- and contextual realities that could affect learning transfer.
- Recommend ways instructional design could respond realistically.



Reflection

If AI produces generic learner stereotypes, refine the prompt with more operational detail and real-world nuance.



STAGE PURPOSE

D0 focuses on active practice.

Capability develops through participation, experimentation, feedback, and repetition – not passive information exposure.

PROMPT BLOCK

Design practical learning activities for adult learners developing:

[SKILL OR CAPABILITY]

- The activities should:
- prioritise participation,
- simulate realistic decisions,
- encourage reflection,
- allow mistakes safely,
- and connect directly to workplace behaviour.



Remember

Avoid:

- passive content dumping,
- generic quizzes,
- unrealistic role-plays,
- or unnecessary gamification.

Recommend:

- scenarios,
- practice exercises,
- coaching interactions,
- microlearning activities,
- reflection prompts,
- and applied decision-making tasks.



Reflection

AI tends to produce “safe” activities first. Push for specificity, realism, emotional tension, and operational authenticity.



APPLY

STAGE PURPOSE

APPLY focuses on transfer into real performance.

Learning only matters if capability moves beyond the learning environment.

PROMPT BLOCK

Help me design learning transfer strategies for:

[SKILL / LEARNING PROGRAMME]

The learners must apply this capability within:

[WORK CONTEXT]



SUGGESTIONS

- workplace application opportunities,
- decision-making moments,
- coaching conversations,
- performance support tools,
- operational reinforcement,
- and realistic accountability mechanisms.
- Identify where workplace culture or systems may undermine transfer.



Reflection

Sometimes the environment blocks application more than the learner does. AI can reveal this surprisingly quickly.



INTEGRATE

STAGE PURPOSE

INTEGRATE focuses on embedding capability into behaviour, habits, identity, and ongoing responsibility.

This is where instructional design moves beyond events and into sustainable development.

PROMPT BLOCK

Help me design reinforcement strategies that support long-term behavioural integration for:

[CAPABILITY]

The learners operate within:

[WORKPLACE / COMMUNITY / LEARNING CONTEXT]



Recommend

- reflective practices,
- behavioural cues,
- reinforcement systems,
- peer accountability,
- coaching structures,
- and methods that strengthen consistency over time.
- Identify points where behavioural regression may occur.



Reflection

AI often assumes rational behaviour. Humans remain gloriously inconsistent. Design accordingly.



MAINTAIN

STAGE PURPOSE

THINK focuses on clarifying the real problem before rushing toward content production.

Many learning interventions fail because the organisation requests training before properly understanding:

- the performance issue,
- the capability gap,
- the environmental pressure,
- or whether learning is even the correct solution.

AI can help instructional designers interrogate these assumptions more systematically.

PROMPT BLOCK

Help me create a long-term capability maintenance strategy for:

[SKILL / PROGRAMME]

The learners need continued reinforcement because:

[REASON]



Suggest

- root causes
- assumptions
- missing information
- stakeholder blind spots
- and questions that should be investigated before designing training.



Reflection

AI often identifies patterns quickly, but it may oversimplify complex organisational realities. Use outputs as investigative starting points, not definitive diagnoses.

use prompts carefully.
question outputs constantly.
protect learner dignity.
interrogate assumptions.
experiment responsibly.

FINAL REFLECTION

AI is changing instructional design.

But more importantly, it is changing how instructional designers think about learning itself.

The real opportunity is not automation alone.

It is the possibility of becoming:

- more reflective,
- more structured,
- more experimental,
- more context-aware,
- and more intentional about how capability develops.

The future of instructional design may belong less to content factories and more to learning architects capable of combining:

- human judgement,
- operational understanding,
- learner empathy,
- structured thinking,
- and responsible AI collaboration.

AND REMEMBER...

Even the most confident AI response should occasionally be treated like a colleague who has consumed too much coffee and replied—all unnecessarily.