AI FOR IMPACT
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PRACTICING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND AI

Human + AI: The Collaboration Lab Workbook

Generate. Judge. Summarize. Prioritize. Detect. Interpret. Explore. Decide. Each lab gives you a realistic task, asks AI to contribute something it does well, and then makes the human role explicit.

UNDERSTAND • PRACTICE • COLLABORATE • ASSESS

AI for Impact | BoulevardLabs + James Madison University

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Eight labs, one cycle, one canvas

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HOW TO WORK THROUGH IT

Each lab is two pages: the pairing and the setup on the left, the exercise and the human checkpoints on the right. Do them in any order, one per sitting. The pages are meant to be written on.

INTRODUCTION

Why a Collaboration Lab?

AI is most useful when people understand both sides of the partnership: what the technology can contribute and what still depends on human context, judgment, standards, priorities, and accountability.

This workbook is built around practice. Each lab gives you a realistic task, asks AI to contribute something it does well, and then makes the human role explicit. The goal is not to prove that humans are better than AI or that AI is better than humans. The goal is to learn how to combine their strengths deliberately.

THE CORE IDEA

AI contributes capability. People contribute what makes that capability useful.

What you will practice

Generation + Judgment
Create more possibilities, then decide what is worth keeping.

Summarization + Prioritization
Reduce information, then determine what actually matters.

Pattern Recognition + Interpretation
Surface signals, then connect them to real-world meaning.

Options + Decision
Expand the choice set, then weigh tradeoffs and own the outcome.

Speed + Direction
Accelerate work, then make sure it is headed toward the right objective.

Processing + Context
Organize information, then add the history, nuance, and priorities AI does not automatically know.

Prediction + Weighing Consequences
Explore likely outcomes, then consider impact and uncertainty.

First Draft + Defining What Good Looks Like
Start faster, then apply standards and expertise.

USE APPROVED TOOLS AND APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

Do not enter confidential, proprietary, personal, classified, regulated, or otherwise restricted information into an AI system unless your organization has explicitly approved that use. Use sanitized or fictional examples when needed.

USE THIS IN EVERY LAB

The Human + AI Collaboration Cycle

Across all eight labs, use the same six-step cycle. It turns AI from a one-shot answer machine into a deliberate working partner.

1	**ASK**	Define the task, objective, audience, and context. Give AI enough information to make a useful first contribution.
2	**REVIEW**	Read the output as work to be evaluated, not as an answer to be accepted automatically.
3	**REFINE**	Correct the direction, add missing context, tighten constraints, or ask for a different form of output.
4	**CHALLENGE**	Ask what assumptions were made, what was omitted, what alternatives exist, or where the reasoning is weakest.
5	**VERIFY**	Check facts, sources, calculations, evidence, and high-stakes claims using appropriate methods and trusted sources.
6	**DECIDE**	Apply human judgment. Determine what to use, change, reject, escalate, or act on — and remain accountable for the outcome.

Before you begin

- Choose low-risk, non-sensitive tasks while you are learning.
- Save the first AI output before refining it. Comparison is part of the learning.
- Do not judge success by speed alone. Judge whether the result became more useful, accurate, relevant, and appropriate.
- If you complete this workbook with a team, compare where people made different human judgments. Those differences are often the most valuable part of the discussion.

LAB 1

01 Generation + Judgment

AI CONTRIBUTES

Generation

AI can rapidly produce drafts, ideas, alternatives, concepts, and possible answers. It expands the number of possibilities you can consider in a short amount of time.

THE HUMAN PART

Judgment

People determine what is accurate, relevant, appropriate, useful, distinctive, and worth keeping. More output does not automatically mean better output.

Why this pairing matters

This lab separates the ability to generate from the ability to evaluate. The goal is to resist choosing the first plausible answer and instead make your standards visible.

Scenario

You need three possible approaches for improving a recurring team process. You know the current process well, but you want AI to help you explore alternatives.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can create the options. Human judgment determines which ones deserve to move forward.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 1 EXERCISE · GENERATION + JUDGMENT

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Generate five meaningfully different approaches to improve this process: [describe a non-sensitive process]. For each approach, explain the main benefit, likely tradeoff, and what would need to change.
```

Steps

1. Before asking AI, write down three criteria that define a good solution for you.
2. Run the prompt and save all five options.
3. Rank the options against your criteria before asking AI which one is best.
4. Ask AI to critique the two options you ranked highest and identify weaknesses or missing assumptions.
5. Make a final selection or combine elements from multiple options. Write one sentence explaining why your judgment changed or stayed the same.

Human checkpoints

Which option looked strongest at first glance? _____

Which criterion changed your ranking most? _____

What did AI generate that you would not have considered? _____

What did you reject even though AI presented it confidently? _____

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

_____

_____

_____

LAB 2

02 Summarization + Prioritization

AI CONTRIBUTES

Summarization

AI can compress long documents, notes, meetings, and research into a much smaller amount of information. It reduces volume and makes material faster to review.

THE HUMAN PART

Prioritization

People decide which details matter most to the task, customer, mission, or decision. A shorter answer is not necessarily the right answer.

Why this pairing matters

This lab shows why summarization is not the same as prioritization. AI can shorten information without knowing which detail carries the greatest consequence in your situation.

Scenario

You have a long, non-sensitive document or set of notes and need a concise summary for a specific audience.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can shorten the information. People decide what deserves attention.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 2 EXERCISE · SUMMARIZATION + PRIORITIZATION

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Summarize the information below for [audience] with this objective: [objective]. Keep
any detail that would change a decision, and list what you chose to leave out.
```

Steps

1. Choose a long, non-sensitive document or set of notes you know well.
2. Name the audience and the decision the summary needs to support.
3. Run the prompt and save the first summary before refining it.
4. Mark anything essential that was dropped, and anything included that does not matter here.
5. Rewrite the priority order yourself, then ask AI to summarize again against your order.

Human checkpoints

What mattered most to your audience? _____

Was anything accurate but irrelevant? _____

What would have been risky to omit? _____

What did you reorder, and why? _____

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

_____

_____

_____

LAB 3

03 Pattern Recognition + Interpretation

AI CONTRIBUTES

Pattern Recognition

AI can scan information for recurring themes, relationships, anomalies, clusters, and trends. It can surface signals that may otherwise take longer to find.

THE HUMAN PART

Interpretation

People connect those signals to domain knowledge, history, environment, and real-world causes. A pattern is not automatically an explanation.

Why this pairing matters

This lab trains the difference between noticing a pattern and claiming to know why it exists. The human role is to test meaning, competing explanations, and missing context.

Scenario

You have a small, non-sensitive set of observations, survey comments, project notes, or simple data and want to identify recurring patterns.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can surface the signal. People determine what the signal may mean.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 3 EXERCISE · PATTERN RECOGNITION + INTERPRETATION

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Review the information below and identify recurring patterns, anomalies, or
relationships. Separate what is directly supported by the information from possible
interpretations. Do not assume causation.
```

Steps

1. Choose a small dataset or collection of non-sensitive text you understand well.
2. Ask AI to identify patterns and explicitly separate observations from interpretations.
3. For each pattern, write at least two plausible explanations from your own domain knowledge.
4. Ask AI what additional evidence would help distinguish among those explanations.
5. Label each conclusion as observed, plausible, uncertain, or unsupported.

Human checkpoints

Which pattern was directly visible in the information?

Where did interpretation begin?

What context did you have that AI did not?

What additional evidence would change your view?

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

LAB 4

04 Options + Decision

AI CONTRIBUTES

Options

AI can rapidly explore alternatives, compare possibilities, and generate recommendations. It can expand the range of paths available for consideration.

THE HUMAN PART

Decision

People weigh tradeoffs, values, constraints, consequences, and information the system may not have. People also remain accountable for the outcome.

Why this pairing matters

This lab prevents an AI recommendation from quietly becoming the decision. You will use AI to widen and structure the choice set, then make the decision with explicit criteria.

Scenario

You need to choose among several approaches to a low-risk work decision, such as scheduling, sequencing, communication, or process design.

COLLABORATION PATTERN

> *AI can expand your options. People weigh them and own the decision.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 4 EXERCISE · OPTIONS + DECISION

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Generate four viable options for [decision]. Compare them using these criteria:
[criteria]. Identify tradeoffs, assumptions, and what additional information would be
useful before deciding.
```

Steps

1. Define the decision and list the criteria that matter before asking AI for a recommendation.
2. Ask AI for options and tradeoffs. Do not ask which option is “best” yet.
3. Add any constraints or stakeholder considerations AI could not know automatically.
4. Ask AI to show how the ranking changes if one criterion becomes more important.
5. Make the decision yourself and document which factors were decisive.

Human checkpoints

Did AI broaden the set of options? _____

Which tradeoff required human judgment? _____

What important criterion was missing at first? _____

Who owns the final decision and its consequences? _____

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

_____

_____

_____

LAB 5

05 Speed + Direction

AI CONTRIBUTES

Speed

AI can accelerate drafting, research preparation, analysis, organization, and repetitive knowledge work. It can reduce the time between task and first output.

THE HUMAN PART

Direction

People define the objective, audience, priorities, constraints, and desired outcome. Faster work is only valuable when it is headed in the right direction.

Why this pairing matters

This lab teaches you to define success before optimizing for speed. The fastest output is not useful if the task itself was poorly framed.

Scenario

Choose a recurring task you would like to complete faster, such as drafting a status update, organizing notes, preparing a meeting agenda, or creating a first-pass analysis.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can make work faster. Human direction helps make sure faster is better.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 5 EXERCISE · SPEED + DIRECTION

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Help me complete this task efficiently: [task]. Before producing the output, restate the objective, audience, constraints, and definition of success. Ask me for anything important that is missing.
```

Steps

1. Write a one-sentence definition of what a successful result must accomplish.
2. Ask AI to restate the task before it starts. Correct any misunderstanding.
3. Have AI produce the first output and note how much time it saved.
4. Review whether the faster output actually met your success criteria.
5. Improve the task instructions so the next attempt is both faster and more useful.

Human checkpoints

What was the true objective of the task?

Did speed create any new quality problems?

What direction did only you know to provide?

Would you use this workflow again? Why or why not?

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

LAB 6

06 Processing + Context

AI CONTRIBUTES

Processing

AI can organize, transform, compare, categorize, and synthesize large amounts of information. It can help people work through information more efficiently.

THE HUMAN PART

Context

People supply organizational history, relationships, exceptions, priorities, unwritten norms, and situational nuance that may not exist in the information AI receives.

Why this pairing matters

This lab makes hidden context visible. AI may process the available information well and still produce a weak result because the most important context was never included.

Scenario

You need AI to organize or compare a set of non-sensitive information, but the task depends on background knowledge that is obvious to you and invisible to the system.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can process the information. People provide the context that makes it useful.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 6 EXERCISE · PROCESSING + CONTEXT

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Organize and synthesize the information below for [purpose]. Separate what is
explicit in the source from assumptions you are making. List any context that would
materially change your interpretation.
```

Steps

1. Choose a task where organizational or situational context matters.
2. Ask AI to process the information without giving it every piece of background context.
3. Review the assumptions and context gaps it identifies.
4. Add only the context that is appropriate and necessary, then rerun the task.
5. Compare the outputs and identify which human-supplied context changed the result most.

Human checkpoints

What did AI process correctly without help?

What context was invisible to the system?

Which assumptions were reasonable but wrong for your situation?

How can you supply context without oversharing?

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

LAB 7

07 Prediction + Weighing Consequences

AI CONTRIBUTES

Prediction

AI can use patterns and available information to estimate likely outcomes, surface possible risks, and explore what might happen under different assumptions.

THE HUMAN PART

Weighing Consequences

People consider impact, uncertainty, risk tolerance, ethics, priorities, and what happens if the prediction is wrong. Probability is only one part of a decision.

Why this pairing matters

This lab teaches you to treat a forecast as decision support, not certainty. You will separate likelihood from consequence and explicitly consider error costs.

Scenario

Use a low-stakes forecasting question where you can provide non-sensitive assumptions, such as estimating workload, demand, schedule risk, or likely project bottlenecks.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can estimate what may happen. People determine what those possibilities mean and what to do about them.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 7 EXERCISE · PREDICTION + WEIGHING CONSEQUENCES

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Based only on the information below, outline three plausible outcomes: expected,
optimistic, and adverse. State the assumptions behind each, what evidence would
increase or decrease confidence, and the consequences if the estimate is wrong.
```

Steps

1. Define what is being predicted and what decision the prediction would inform.
2. Ask AI for multiple plausible outcomes rather than one confident forecast.
3. Review the assumptions and identify which ones are most uncertain.
4. For each outcome, write the consequence if it occurs and the consequence if the prediction is wrong.
5. Decide what action, if any, is justified given both likelihood and impact.

Human checkpoints

Which assumption drives the forecast most? _____

What is the cost of a false positive? _____

What is the cost of a false negative? _____

What decision remains human regardless of the forecast? _____

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

_____

_____

_____

LAB 8

08 First Draft + Defining What Good Looks Like

AI CONTRIBUTES

The First Draft

AI can move from a blank page to a usable starting point quickly. It can produce a draft, concept, outline, analysis, or structure in seconds.

THE HUMAN PART

Defining What Good Looks Like

People apply standards: audience, objective, accuracy, voice, quality, relevance, originality, and fit for purpose. A draft is not finished merely because it is complete.

Why this pairing matters

This lab turns quality from an instinct into explicit criteria. You will define “good” before editing so AI can accelerate creation without lowering standards.

Scenario

Choose a low-risk deliverable you know how to evaluate well: a short email, one-page brief, presentation outline, meeting agenda, FAQ, or similar work product.

> COLLABORATION PATTERN
>
> *AI can give you a starting point. Human standards determine when it is finished.*

Before you use AI

Write one thing only you or your team knows that could materially affect the result:

LAB 8 EXERCISE · FIRST DRAFT + DEFINING WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Run the collaboration

STARTER PROMPT

```
Create a first draft of [deliverable] for [audience] with this objective:
[objective]. Use these constraints: [constraints]. Do not assume the first draft
is final.
```

Steps

1. Before generating anything, list five standards the final work must meet.
2. Ask AI for a first draft and evaluate it against those standards.
3. Mark what should be kept, changed, removed, or verified.
4. Give AI targeted revision instructions based on your standards rather than asking it to “make it better.”
5. Complete the final human review and note which changes required expertise, taste, context, or accountability.

Human checkpoints

Which standard did AI meet immediately?

Which standard required the most human intervention?

What looked polished but was not good enough?

How did defining quality first improve the collaboration?

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION?

TEAM DEBRIEF

Compare the human part

If several people complete the same lab, the differences between their judgments are often more revealing than the similarities. Use this page to compare how people framed the task, what they accepted, what they rejected, and why.

Where did participants give AI different context or constraints?

Which outputs did people evaluate differently? What standards were they using?

Where did domain expertise change the interpretation?

Which decisions could be delegated to AI assistance, and which should remain explicitly human-led?

What new team norm, checklist, or guardrail would improve this kind of collaboration next time?

FACILITATOR TIP

Do not force consensus too quickly. Ask people to explain the standards, assumptions, and context behind their choices. The purpose is to make good judgment more explicit and repeatable.

CANVAS

Human + AI Collaboration Canvas

Use this canvas on any new task before deciding how AI should participate.

1 · OUTCOME

What are we trying to accomplish? What would a useful result look like?

2 · AI CONTRIBUTION

What part of the task could AI help generate, summarize, process, compare, detect, predict, or accelerate?

3 · HUMAN CONTRIBUTION

What requires context, judgment, prioritization, interpretation, standards, accountability, or relationship knowledge?

4 · INPUTS & BOUNDARIES

What information is needed? What information should not be entered? What tools are approved?

5 · REVIEW STANDARD

How will we evaluate the output? What must be checked or verified?

6 · DECISION POINT

Who decides what gets used, changed, rejected, or acted on?

BEFORE THE FIRST PROMPT

Filling in six boxes takes two minutes and decides most of the quality. If boxes three and six are empty, the task is not ready for AI participation yet.

QUICK REFERENCE

What AI contributes vs. what people contribute

AI CONTRIBUTION	HUMAN CONTRIBUTION	ASK YOURSELF
Generation	**Judgment**	*What makes an option worth keeping?*
Summarization	**Prioritization**	*What matters most here, and to whom?*
Pattern recognition	**Interpretation**	*What does the signal mean in context?*
Options	**Decision**	*What tradeoffs matter, and who owns the outcome?*
Speed	**Direction**	*Are we accelerating the right work?*
Processing	**Context**	*What does the system not know about our situation?*
Prediction	**Weighing consequences**	*What if the forecast is wrong?*
First draft	**Defining what good looks like**	*What standards must the final work meet?*

Five habits of strong collaboration

- Define the objective before optimizing the output.
- Make human standards explicit instead of assuming AI knows what "good" means.
- Ask for alternatives, assumptions, and uncertainty — not just conclusions.
- Verify according to the stakes. The more consequential the output, the stronger the review.
- Keep accountability visible. AI can contribute to a decision without owning it.

ACTION PLAN

Your Collaboration Action Plan

Choose one real, appropriate workflow where you can apply what you practiced in this workbook.

THE WORKFLOW

What recurring task or process will you test?

THE AI ROLE

What will AI contribute?

THE HUMAN ROLE

What will remain explicitly human-led?

THE STANDARD

How will you know whether the result is good enough?

THE BOUNDARIES

What information, permissions, or safeguards matter?

THE MEASURE

What will improve if the collaboration works: time, quality, consistency, insight, capacity, or something else?

ONE FINAL QUESTION

If the AI output disappeared tomorrow, would you understand the task and the standards well enough to do the work responsibly? Strong Human + AI collaboration should strengthen human capability, not hide it.

NEXT STEP

Continue building capability

The Collaboration Lab is one part of the AI for Impact resource set. Use the other resources when you need a different kind of practice.

RESOURCE	PURPOSE
AI Fluency Field Guide	Build the foundational understanding needed to talk about, evaluate, and use modern AI more intelligently.
30-Day AI Skills Challenge	Build practical habits through short exercises that strengthen context, iteration, comparison, verification, and application.
AI Capability Self-Assessment	Identify where you or your team are already strong and where additional learning or practice may be needed.

THE GOAL

The goal is not to make every person an AI expert. It is to build people who understand what AI contributes, know what they still need to contribute, and can make that partnership useful in real work.

AI contributes capability. People contribute what makes that capability useful.