

Sample Syllabus Statements and Activities for Using AI in School



Introduction

More than 300 educators engaged in thought-provoking conversations surrounding AI's role in teaching and learning during [Course Hero's inaugural AI Academy](#). A central theme among participants as the program progressed was a growing acceptance of AI in education. Educators familiarized themselves with AI tools and became more comfortable introducing these tools to students.

Educator Douglas Anderson says, "Now that I have several months of experience with ChatGPT and other AI generators, my understanding and attitude toward these applications has changed. Whereas I was opposed to their introduction and use in the classroom, now I am accepting them with open arms, though hedged with certain parameters that depend upon the subject matter and type of class."

As part of their final project in AI Academy, participants created AI statements to include in their syllabi. If you need guidance on how to talk to your students about AI, use the sample statements from participants below and adapt them for your own syllabus.

Contributors

- **Douglas Anderson**, University of New England – Maine
- **Beth Case**, University of Louisville
- **Ashley Evans**, Valencia College
- **Bryant Lazenby**, Missouri Online
- **Brandon McHenry**, Washington Township Schools
- **Lana Mett**, FVI School of Nursing and Technology
- **David O'Neil**, University of Southern Indiana
- **Kristie-Anne Opaleski**, Jackson School District
- **Dax Parcels**, Palm Beach State College
- **Rene Peralta**, University of Oklahoma
- **Steve Strain**, University of Memphis
- **Bridget Trusty**, Rockland Community College
- **Lisa Young**, Maricopa County Community College District

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Defining Generative AI for the Classroom

Below, educators Lisa Young, Stephen Strain, and Lana Mett share clear descriptions of GenAI and AI-related concepts:

Generative Artificial Intelligence is a category of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms that generate new outputs based on the data they have been trained on. ([World Economic Forum](#)). Unlike traditional AI systems that are designed to recognize patterns and make predictions, [generative AI](#) creates new content in the form of images, text, audio, and more.

Examples of generative AI tools include:

- ChatGPT
- Google Bard
- Claude
- Microsoft Copilot
- Stable Diffusion
- GrammarlyGo
- Adobe Firefly

[AI Literacy](#) is defined as a set of competencies that enable individuals to critically evaluate AI technologies; communicate and collaborate effectively with AI; and use AI as a tool online, at home, and in the workplace. ([Long & Magerko, 2020](#)).

AI systems and tools are able to perform human-like tasks such as answering unstructured questions and requests, analyzing information and drawing conclusions, and solving problems. To achieve these tasks, AI processes large amounts of input data to find patterns, which can be used to generate insights.

Using AI is an effective way to improve productivity, stimulate creativity, create new solutions, improve communication, and promote critical thinking and lifelong learning.

4 Suggestions for Student GenAI Use

Educator Beth Case shares the following AI use cases with students through a formal AI syllabus statement:

- 1. Ask For Examples to Clarify Confusing Concepts:** For example, in a psychology course, you might ask for examples to help you understand the difference between classical and operant conditioning.
- 2. Copy and Paste Sections of Peer-Reviewed Articles to Get Summaries In Layman's Terms:** Some of the articles you will be asked to read are complex and include academic jargon. GenAI can simplify the language to make it easier to understand.
- 3. Get Suggestions to Improve Your Writing:** After you have written a draft, you can ask GenAI for suggestions on organization, sentence structure, or clarity.
- 4. Brainstorm Topics:** If you have trouble thinking of a topic for your research paper, GenAI can provide a list of possible ideas. Be sure to make sure their suggestions are appropriate for the assignment.

Educator Brandon McHenry says, "Try This: Have the students research AI apps and figure out what each app does, how it works, and what are its uses for school. Apps to research include ChatGPT, Bard, Course Hero, GPTZero, Quillbot, Dall-e 2, Microsoft Bing Image Creator, and Craiyon. Here is an [AI App Organizer template](#) for this activity."

General Principles for Student GenAI Use

Educator Bridget Trusty outlines the following guidelines for students using GenAI in her courses:

 **Attribution is of the Utmost Importance:** Citing the work of other humans is a morally valuable and legally required principle that academia upholds. This principle is equally important as it relates to the transfer of content that is generated by AI tools. There are organizations, such as MLA and APA, that have created guidelines on how to cite such content. Here is the link for [MLA style](#) and [APA style](#).

 **You are Responsible for Your Content:** Generative AI tools can sometimes produce factually incorrect, biased, and potentially harmful information. As the author of your content, it is YOUR responsibility to verify that any content you use from these tools for factual correctness, bias, and potential for social harm.

 **Documenting Your Work is Key:** If asked, you should be able to demonstrate how much of your work was done by you, and what role generative AI played in assisting you. How you choose to demonstrate your process is your choice. Some suggestions for documenting your process may include: sharing transcripts of your ChatGPT chats using the share feature or adding statements regarding AI use at the end of your submissions.

 **Reflect on Your Experiences:** When you are using AI tools, try and reflect on your experiences. Here are some questions to reflect upon as you document your experiences:

- What parts of your workflow have improved?
- What has it harmed?
- How do you feel after using it?
- In what ways are AI tools beneficial for tax and accounting students?

You may want to incorporate these reflective questions into your documentation process as well.

!? **Challenging These Principles is Highly Encouraged:** As we proceed with the use of generative AI in the classroom, we will continue to refine our principles to meet our needs. It is important to remember that we are all in the early stages of experimenting with generative AI, so I encourage you to challenge these principles based on your experiences and share your thoughts about how they should be revised if needed.

Ethical Reminders for Student AI Use

Educator Ashley Evans shares the following reminders with students regarding ethical AI use:

 **Think Critically.** AI is not infallible—it's not 100% right, 100% of the time. We must evaluate its responses for accuracy and correctness. We must also consider whether we have gotten the wrong answer from AI, or if we have asked it the wrong question.

 **Use AI as a Tool, Not a Crutch.** Merely copying and pasting AI's suggestions is not genuine learning. If you sidestep understanding core concepts, your performance will suffer, which will put your course success at risk.

 **Analyze Bias in AI.** Large language models draw from diverse human-authored content, which may contain biases. It's our duty to be cognizant of these biases when interpreting AI responses.

 **Confirm Accuracy.** There was a time (early 2000s) when people would use Wikipedia as a credible source of information. Now, we all know that it's not. An AI-generated response is not to be considered accurate and trustworthy by default. You should perform additional analysis and research to confirm what AI is telling you.

 **Respect Privacy.** Once you enter information into any AI platform, it's no longer private information. Refrain from feeding personal details, especially pertaining to peers or educators, into any AI system.

 **Be Transparent.** If you used AI to help complete an AI-approved assignment, indicate how and where you used it within your assignment submission.

 **Uphold Academic Integrity.** If you have been explicitly told not to use AI for an assignment, quiz, or exam - don't use it. These assessments are designed to see what YOU know, not what ChatGPT knows. Even with the introduction of AI into our daily lives, humans will never stop needing to know how and why things work.

Helpful Graphics for GenAI and Ethics

Educator Kristie-Ann Opaleski shares graphics with her students to help them understand ethical vs. unethical use of AI:

Safe and Ethical Use of AI	Improper Use of AI
✓ Get feedback and suggestions for improvement on completed writing. ✓ Help organize ideas and content. ✓ Clarify concepts and content you find challenging. ✓ Simplify complex content. ✓ Practice and review skills and knowledge. ✓ Disclose in the "AI Credits" section any assistance received from AI.	✗ Copy and use content directly from AI. ✗ Submit personally identifying information to an AI system. ✗ Use AI-generated content to harass or offend other students. ✗ Rely on AI for completing assignments without personal engagement. ✗ Use AI to plagiarize or cheat. ✗ Fail to disclose the use of AI for assignment completion in the "AI Credits" section.

Content of Image: Kristie-Ann Opaleski

What is Cheating with AI? Creating AI Guidelines

Using AI to brainstorm ideas for the paper

Using AI for spell check and grammar assistance

Using AI to check for plagiarism

Using AI to write an outline for the paper

Using AI to provide feedback on how to improve the paper

Using AI to paraphrase portions of your writing

Using AI to summarize content being read for the paper

Using AI to answer questions about the content

Using AI to write a rough draft of the paper

Using AI to find informational sources for the paper

Using AI for feedback on style and tone

Using AI to properly cite and reference sources

Writing the paper yourself with no help from AI

What are acceptable uses of AI when writing a paper?

Having AI write your paper and submitting it as your own work



Image: [Kristie-Ann Opaleski](#)

Ways for Students to Avoid Inappropriate AI Use

Educator Beth Case helps her students avoid improper use of AI with the following checklist:

- 1. Ask the GenAI for suggestions and advice on how to improve your writing but not to give a rewritten example.** You can request help with sentence structure, grammar, or style, but don't ask the AI to provide verbatim paragraphs for your paper.
- 2. Never copy and paste anything from the GenAI tool.** Always rephrase the information obtained from the AI in your own words and properly cite any sources used.
- 3. Get feedback and then close the GenAI tool before revising your paper.** After receiving assistance from the AI, make sure to revise and edit your work independently.
- 4. If you use GenAI for a written assignment, include a paragraph at the end explaining how you used it and evaluate its usefulness.** If GenAI use is suspected and not acknowledged, you may be asked to rewrite the assignment. GenAI is not allowed for essay test questions.

Addressing GenAI Concerns

Educator Rene Peralta highlights AI concerns in his syllabus statement to ensure students remain aware when using AI:

 **Hallucinations:** OpenAI says ChatGPT sometimes writes plausible sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers. This is an expected behavior of large language models.

 **Accuracy:** ChatGPT has limited knowledge of events that occurred after 2021.

 **Socio-Cultural Bias:** As of December 2022, ChatGPT is prohibited from expressing political opinions or engaging in political activism. However, research suggests that ChatGPT exhibits a [pro-environmental, left-libertarian orientation](#) when prompted to take a stance on political statements from two established voting advice applications.

 **Algorithmic Bias:** ChatGPT demonstrates algorithmic bias—systematic and repeatable errors in a computer system that create unfair outcomes, such as one category over another in ways different from the intended function of the algorithm.

Discussion Questions for Addressing AI with Your Students

Educator Douglas Anderson poses discussion questions in his AI statement to ensure students think critically about AI use:

Inclusivity and Bias

- How might AI systems in education inadvertently perpetuate or amplify existing biases and inequalities in society?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that AI tools in educational settings are inclusive and equitable?
- What might be the role of AI in global education settings?
- Thinking as cultural anthropologists, how might biases manifest differently depending on cultural or regional contexts?

Privacy and Data Security

- With AI systems collecting vast amounts of data to optimize learning experiences, what ethical concerns arise regarding student privacy and data security?
- How should educational institutions address these concerns?

Dependency and Autonomy

- As AI becomes increasingly integrated into educational tools and platforms, what are the potential ethical implications of over-reliance on such technologies? How might this affect students' autonomy and critical thinking skills?

Transparency and Accountability

- Should developers and educators be required to disclose the algorithms and decision-making processes behind AI tools used in educational settings? How can transparency lead to more ethical use of AI in education?

- Are there any potential risks and drawbacks of full transparency?
- Should we consider intellectual property law, competitive advantage, and potential misuse of disclosed algorithms?

Societal Impacts

- Considering the broader societal implications, how might the pervasive use of AI in education affect future job markets, social interactions, and cultural values?
- Are there ethical concerns regarding how AI may shape the aspirations and worldviews of the next generation?

Regulation

- How should governments and international bodies regulate the use of AI in educational settings to ensure ethical considerations are met?

Pedagogical Implications

- How might the use of AI in education change the roles and responsibilities of educators?
- Are there ethical implications to consider in this potential shift?

Educator David O'Neill says, "I want to equip my students with the essential skills needed to harness AI effectively and ethically rather than spend my time policing inappropriate uses. A unit on effective and ethical AI would begin with a thorough exploration of AI, its capabilities, and the terminology that underpins it. Moving forward, I would introduce my students to AI writing assistants, offering them hands-on experiences in using these tools to augment their writing."

Sample AI Statements for Your Syllabus

Educators Dax Parcells and Bryant Lazenby share the following syllabus statements with their students:

Dax Parcell's Syllabus Statement

Welcome to this course, where we embrace the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool for enhancing your educational experience. To ensure its ethical use, I have outlined the following principles that will guide your engagement with AI throughout the course:

1. Ideate Independently:

- While AI can be a valuable resource, it is crucial that you first engage with course materials independently, developing your critical thinking and problem-solving skills. AI should complement your learning, not replace your independent thought and analysis.

2. Attribute Authentically:

- When using AI tools or resources in your assignments, always cite the contributions of AI appropriately. Clearly indicate when AI has been used to generate content or assist in your work. Honesty in attribution is essential to maintaining academic integrity.

3. Verify Rigorously:

- When utilizing AI-generated information or insights, verify the accuracy and reliability of the content rigorously. AI can provide valuable assistance, but it is essential to critically assess its output to ensure its suitability for your academic work.

4. Respect Privacy:

- When incorporating AI into your coursework, be mindful of data privacy and confidentiality. Ensure that the tools and platforms you use adhere to ethical data collection and usage practices. Protect your personal data and respect the privacy of others.

5. Assess Skeptically:

- Approach AI-generated content and arguments with a healthy degree of skepticism. While AI can assist in debates and creative exploration, remember that it is a tool and not a substitute for thoughtful analysis. Always critically evaluate the information provided.

In this course, AI may be used in specific assignments as a tutor, debate companion, or a creative exploration tool for topics relevant to the curriculum. It is important to use AI judiciously, adhering to the ethical guidelines outlined above.

As a tutor, AI can assist in understanding course content and providing additional explanations, but it should not replace your active engagement in learning. When used as a debate companion, AI can help you gather information and arguments, but it is essential to critically assess and refine the content generated by the AI. When exploring topics creatively, AI can be a source of inspiration, but your originality and insights remain central to the creative process.

By following these ethical guidelines, you will harness the power of AI to enhance your learning experience while maintaining the integrity of your education. I encourage you to embrace AI as a valuable tool in your academic journey but always remember that your unique intellectual contributions are the heart of your education.

Bryant Lazenby's Syllabus Statement

In this course, we embrace the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance your learning experience. AI, in this context, refers to computer systems and algorithms designed to mimic human intelligence. AI comes in various forms, from rule-based systems to machine learning algorithms, and it can be a valuable tool to aid your studies.

Our Goals and Expectations

Our primary goal is to empower you with the skills to leverage AI effectively in your academic journey. We want you to feel comfortable using AI as a supportive tool to kickstart assignments and enhance your learning process. We believe that AI should be accessible to all, regardless of your prior experience with the technology.

Diverse AI Applications

Throughout this course, you will be introduced to a diverse range of AI applications relevant to our discipline. These applications may include natural language processing tools for text analysis, machine learning algorithms for data analysis, and AI-based virtual assistants for research and information retrieval.

By integrating AI into our daily teaching and curriculum, you will gain hands-on experience, bridging the gap between theory and real-world application. AI tools that may be helpful include:

- Grammarly: This AI-powered writing assistant can help students improve their writing skills by checking for grammar, spelling, and style errors.
- Image Creation (DALL-E, DeepDream, etc): These tools allow students to experiment with machine learning and image recognition.
- AI-Powered Content Creation: Tools like ChatGPT and Copy.ai generate human-like text based on prompts.

What You'll Gain

We are confident that by incorporating AI into your learning experience, you will not only learn how to use AI tools effectively but also develop critical thinking skills. You will learn when and how AI can provide value in our field and be better prepared for an AI-driven future.

Ethical Use of AI

Responsible and ethical AI use is a priority. You will be expected to cite your AI usage in your assignments, including the prompts and tools used. This promotes transparency and encourages thoughtful decision-making when using AI in your coursework.

We are excited to embark on this journey of integrating AI into your learning experience. AI has the potential to enhance your problem-solving abilities, foster digital literacy, and prepare you for an AI-powered future. We believe that AI can be a powerful ally in your educational journey, and we are here to guide you every step of the way.

Knowledge is the Antidote to Fear

Course Hero's AI Academy gave educators the opportunity to explore AI tools for their own pedagogical use and determine how students might use these tools in the classroom. By broadening their knowledge, participants felt less afraid of AI, and it became easier to address AI with their students.

Bridget Trusty says, "I am shouting from the rooftops because applying what I am learning is taking the sting out of all of the overwhelm regarding AI. I truly believe that the more we learn and apply what we've learned, we will realize that AI is a great assistant for us as educators and it gives us so much time back to give to our students in making sure they receive the best possible learning experience."
