

Teaching for Authentic Student

Learning in an AI Age: Strategies for Success Series

2026

Flower Darby

September 16, 2026

Introduction

Welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere, Strategies for Success in Digital Teaching and Learning webinar series. This year's theme is practical approaches for supporting Every Learner. It's a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollebeke, and I am the associate director for innovation and programs with Every Learner Everywhere.

Quick housekeeping note, we are recording this for those who cannot join us today. Throughout the presentation, we welcome your questions and comments in the Q&A and in the chat. Every Learner is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible materials. Our slides are designed with high-contrast visuals and large text. We value your feedback to make our content accessible for everyone.

Before I introduce our speaker, I'd like to take just a few minutes out to tell you about Every Learner Everywhere and the mission of our network. Every Learner Everywhere is a collaboration of higher education organizations with the expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of education technologies, curriculum and course design strategies, teaching practices, and support services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. Every Learner Everywhere is sponsored by the Gates Foundation. And here at Every Learner, our collaborative work to advance access to higher education centers on the



transformation of postsecondary teaching and learning. We build capacity in colleges and universities to improve student outcomes with digital learning. Our mission is to partner with institutions to harness digital learning technology, driving innovation in higher education to improve outcomes for Every Learner.

And now, to our speaker for today-- Flower Darby celebrates and promotes effective teaching online and in person to advance learning outcomes for all students. She serves as the director for the Center of Teaching and Learning at Estrella Mountain Community College and has formerly been assistant dean of online and innovative pedagogies and director of teaching for student success.

These roles have allowed her to build on her experience teaching in person and online for over 30 years in a range of subjects, including psychology, English, technology, education, dance, and Pilates. Flower has written several books, including *The Joyful Online Teacher*, *Finding Our Fizz in Asynchronous Classes*, just published this year, *The Norton Guide to Equity-Minded Teaching*, and *Small Teaching Online, Applying Learning Science in Online Classes*.

Flower, I'm going to hand it over to you.

Presentation

Wonderful. Thank you so much, Norma. And thanks to everybody for taking the time to be here live or to watch the recording later. I am here to talk about how we can teach in ways that help students learn, and I have a lot to share with you.

So I'm going to jump right in. But before I do, I want to make sure to give that extra shout out in gratitude to the team at Every Learner Everywhere, my friends there, and again, to all of you who are taking the time to join me, whether it's live or recorded,

because your time is your most precious resource. I don't take that for granted at all. So thank you for being here.

Let's jump in. When I am not working, I do have a life. And this is a set of recent photos, somewhat recent, of my family. My husband, Tim, is a strong partner and collaborator in my work. I really could not do what I do without his wisdom and experience that comes from over 30 years of supporting faculty teaching with technology in university and college settings.

We have three kids, young adults now. And they just teach me so much about what it means to be a student, a learner, a person in this world, a citizen. You'll hear more about them. But why did I take this very quick moment to introduce myself, my family? It's because this is a key strategy in terms of teaching for authentic learning in an AI age.

Help your students see more about who you are. If you're an instructional designer or in that kind of a support role, talk with your faculty colleagues about humanizing themselves in our classes, especially online classes. Now, this is going to vary. It may not be the pictures of your family's faces on a screen. Mine are used to it by now.

But I encourage every instructor to build in and be intentional about helping students see a little bit about who you are, your dog, your pets, your vacations, your hobbies, something about you. It will help your students connect. And that will motivate them to engage more deeply, that will lead to better learning.

So as I mentioned, we have a lot to talk about today. And I'm very happy to jump right in. What I will share quickly is that when I'm presenting, I'm really intentional to keep my eyes on you in the camera. This is an immediacy cue. It reduces the distance between us, makes it feel like we're in the same room. This is another strategy that I recommend if you're teaching to the camera live or recorded.

So I'm not watching the chat. But I really think it's a valuable resource for those of you who are here live. Please engage with each other in the chat. Share resources. We do have a Q&A pod as well that you can put those questions. Now, periodically, I am going to jump in and ask you a direct question, and I'm going to invite you to engage in the chat box. You don't have to. It's just an invitation.

When we do that, I'll take a look at the chat. But otherwise, I'm not watching it. However, my friends at Every Learner Everywhere have agreed to keep an eye on that as well.

So introduction, we need to set the stage. We need to think about what students are doing right now, what they're not doing. I do think we would be remiss to not touch briefly on the ethical concerns that we should have and grapple with. And yet, also, I'm going to make a case for ethical good that we can do in teaching with and without AI.

We have a few first steps for folks who haven't really traveled very far down this road yet, and there's a lot of people in that category. And then we are going to end with very practical strategies. How do we update assignments, projects, tests? And how about a few examples from across the disciplines? We will have a few minutes for questions at the end as well.

But before we jump in, I always need to know who's here, how are you feeling? And so I'm going to ask you, please, if you'd like, to put one word in the chat that describes the way you feel about teaching in an AI age. Where are you at, one word in the chat if you would like to.

All right. I see the answers scrolling in. Excited, skeptical, exhausted, thrilled, yikes, perplexed, great, growing, conflicted– I like that answer. Overwhelmed, amazed, intimidated– I like that answer too. A receptive mixed feelings, 100% opportunity,

getting there, yes, concerned. And we should be concerned, right, Michelle? Hello. Good to see you here. Cautious, yes. Please keep coming in with those words.

I'm going to move forward because what I have found is that when I ask this question-- I've been asking this question for almost four years now, right-- we do find ourselves all over the map-- not happy, I see you. I hear you. And I find myself moving around this map on any given day. There are days that I feel optimistic and OK, we got this. We're up for the challenge. And there's a lot of other days that I'm frustrated and overwhelmed and worried about AI and our future as well.

But what we're here to do today is to really help each other think about how we can move forward. I am convinced that higher education is here to stay and real, live human faculty members are here to stay. And again, all of us who do that support work as well and supporting effective teaching and learning course design, our expertise and our humanity is needed more than ever before.

So that's what we're here today, to begin to think or keep thinking-- some of us have been thinking about this for a while-- what else might we be able to do. I do want to clarify that by the time we're done with this hour, we're not going to have all the answers. That's not going to be possible. But we are here together on this journey. And that's why I'm so grateful that you are taking the time to engage live or watch the recording as well.

We're going to have to deal with some uncomfortable truths as we go through this material. Certainly, there are no easy answers and no foolproof fixes. I do not have a crystal ball. We debate these questions within my own household on a daily basis. I don't know. But what I do know is that students need foundational knowledge. We know for a fact that students have to be able to have the material, and the information, and the skills, the cognition right here. We know that.

I'm going to argue, I believe students need AI skills because-- I would say two things at this point. First of all, job candidates who can talk knowledgeably about how they will use AI to do their work more effectively are getting the job. They are more successful, and they are being offered higher salaries. But for me, it's more than just about helping people find jobs. It's about creating and developing engaged citizens in this really dynamic democracy.

I want skeptical individuals in my neighborhood and in my community. I want people who stop and think, and assess, and discern when to use AI, when not to use AI, because the world is full of bad actors. And so for me, in higher education, it's not just that we are talking about preparing students for the workplace, it is about preparing a more engaged citizenry as we're still in our 250th year here in this country.

So what we also know, students are very mixed in their feelings and practices regarding AI. I have a lot to share on that. I'm going to run through some slides on that topic in just a moment. But it is not really appropriate to say that all students are cheating all the time. We certainly cannot say that no student is ever using AI in an irresponsible way. There's a lot of mixed feelings and practices here.

I'm going to argue today that we know we must foster critical thinking, and we can. We really can. It is an imperative, in my opinion, given the state of the world and our society and the headlines that we see. Critical thinking is more important than ever before.

What I would also argue is that in order to do this work, we should lean into our academic superpowers of curiosity and critique. So I invite the pushback. I really do. Certainly, some of what I share today is not going to land well with everybody. That's how I feel when I read or watch or attend anything about AI and teaching, as I never agree fully with the speaker or the author. But I'm giving us things to think about, push back on debate.

That's why I encourage you to be active in the chat, if that's helpful for you. If you're here live and that's a distraction, by all means, leave it alone, and don't look at it. Before we go on, I want to address the elephant bot in the room. Everything that I talk about today can be gamed. Students can game every single recommendation that I'm going to talk about. Students can cheat.

We know that wearable tech is making it possible to use AI inappropriately, even in in-person and secured environments. So I'm going to ask you to suspend that elephant bot just with me here during this time because we're going to be looking at ways to help students choose to do their work in a way that helps them to truly learn what were asking.

So on that note, let's dive in a little bit more about what recent research and surveys are showing about how students are using AI, what their perceptions and attitudes are. But then also, we'll end this section of the talk with a few ideas to help students choose to do their work for themselves. And then we're going to go deeper into that when we get to the practical strategies section.

So again, main disclaimer here-- each student is an individual, and they are making their own choices. I would say AI, generative AI in particular, is the most highly individualized educational technology or societal cultural technology that I have ever seen. I've been in higher ed for 30 years, been walking the planet for a couple more decades than that, and AI is just really polarizing. And so we need to make that clear.

I'll give some broad strokes of generalizations about what the research is showing, what we're seeing and hearing from students. But all of it is complex. And so we know that there are plenty of students who are using AI in ways that undermine their learning. We know that. We also know that not all cognitive offloading is bad. There are

emerging studies-- and at the end of this section, I'm going to provide a link to more information and resources for what I'm talking about here.

But there are emerging studies that are showing that appropriate cognitive offloading using AI to reduce the extraneous load actually frees up more cognitive resources for the mental effort that is required to process new information, to remember it, to retrieve it, to apply it, analyze it, and evaluate it. So for me, I think about cognitive offloading in ways that are productive for me is my daily to do list.

If I did not have my daily to do list, I would not get a thing done. And I'm the kind of person that has a to do list on a piece of paper. And I'd like to cross off the item with a pen or a pencil. That is getting all the swirling thoughts out of my mind into a place, and then I can cross them off. For me, that is a productive use of-- or example of cognitive offloading.

And some of our students are using AI in those kinds of ways, to help with executive functioning, to help free up the mental capacity to focus on the learning. So not all cognitive offloading or use of AI is bad. We know that some students hate AI, 100%, very, very concerned about the environmental costs, other ethical implications that we'll touch on. Many students are not wanting to use AI. We term them conscientious objectors.

And I think we can't-- we're in a point in this moment that we should respect that. However, we also know that many students are using AI in productive ways that advance their learning. For example, they're creating study guides. They're creating practice sets. They're doing their own work and using AI to give them feedback on that work. Or they're using tutor bots, for example, to guide them through the learning process. We know that many students are choosing to use AI in these ways.

And as I was just talking about, AI can help with executive function. And for me, this is particularly salient when we think about our neurodivergent students. Students with autism or ADHD may really struggle with the organizational and planning part of being successful in college classes.

AI is being used by very grateful students to help develop the study plan or the schedule to create the final paper or project by the deadline. AI can really help our neurodivergent students. That's just one example of ways that AI can help people with differences in how they learn.

Now, what I'm going to argue here is that we can and must structure appropriate use for AI for our students. We can help them choose integrity. I'm going to share two recommendations for right now just to plant the seed. And then as we go through the practical section, we'll go into a little bit more depth here. But one of the ways that we can help students choose integrity, the most important way is to help them care about what they're learning.

We know from that salience network in our mental structures that when we care about something that we're thinking about or learning, we can think much more deeply about this. This is coming out of recent neuroscience, specifically affective neuroscience. The finding is that people and students look an awful lot like people, can only think deeply about what we care about.

So for me, I think a lot about my hairstyle. I really care about my hair, and I put a lot of thought into it. You can think about if you're driving to campus, maybe you don't need your full mental focus to operate the vehicle. If your mind is wandering, maybe you're not listening to a podcast, the mind wanders to what it cares about.

And so we can put that superpower to work, help our students see what they're learning is necessary and relevant for their well-being as an individual, as a citizen, as

a future employee. And when we do that, when we help them see the relevance of what they're learning and why they need to know that information for themselves, they will do the work of learning.

Now, the second thing that— I'm just going to plant this seed. We don't have a lot of time today to talk about this. But the psychology literature on human cheating is that we all are tempted to cut corners. It's not just students, it's all of us. We will cut corners under certain, very predictable conditions, for example, when the stakes are too high, when the pressure is up, when the deadline is tight, when we feel underprepared or equipped to do the work.

So anything that we can do to bring down the pressure is going to reduce the temptation to outsource learning using AI or any other number of cheating activities that existed before Gen AI. Maybe we think about alternative grading. Maybe we think about test retakes, or dropping the lowest score, or having a flexible due date policy, a late work policy. Anything we can do to reduce the pressure is going to help nudge students to make that integrous choice with their learning.

So as I mentioned earlier, we know that many students have their own ethical concerns. I would argue a lot of students are not really thinking about the ethics. But as educators and as those who support teaching and learning in college classes, we want to think about all the facets of— I will present the concerns first, and then I'll make a case for some reasons why I think that we can and should teach with and about AI. So just briefly, I don't have time to dwell on these.

But we know that there is a lot of concern about the environmental costs of AI and data centers. We know that these tools were trained and continue to be trained on the backs of people who are not being paid for the labor that they are undertaking and who are experiencing severe mental trauma, as they have to train these tools on what to

exclude. So viewing really horrific material from the web and telling the bot don't include that, that's taking a toll on people. And I'm very deeply concerned about that.

We know that AI amplifies existing societal biases. We know, of course, that there are intellectual property challenges that artists and creatives are deeply concerned, as just one example, about their work being taken and reused. We know that students have unequal access.

We were just talking about this morning at Estrella Mountain Community College, which is where I now work, we were talking about students not necessarily having access to, for example, pay for a premium tool, or maybe they don't have time because they're working multiple jobs to really become good at using AI. There are unequal levels of access in student use of AI. And what that is resulting in is unequal accusations.

So unfortunately, these are falling along predictable lines of students who have historically fared worse in higher education because of systemic issues and societal problems. These are the students who are more often to be more likely to be accused of illicit use of AI, when in fact, they were not using AI illicitly.

I have concerns about all of these issues. But I am going to make the case today that there are good things that we can and should do with AI in our teaching. And for me, first of all, it is about leveraging assistive technology. I was talking earlier about neurodivergent students. I'm also thinking about those glasses that have-- the Meta AI glasses. That is really concerning to me.

And we're seeing things in social media about unauthorized glimpses of people who don't know they're being photographed, for example. But what we're also seeing is that people are using those glasses in order to get a vision. When people with low vision or who are blind are wearing those glasses. There's a volunteer at the other end who is

telling the individual moving about through the world what is in front of them and describing, providing an audible description of the world around them. That is phenomenal.

And there's other examples. There are so many opportunities and so much potential in terms of the assistive technology aspect.

We can structure more productive learning strategies. And here's a spoiler alert. The research is showing that that's exactly what we need to do. We need faculty, instructional designers, and all of us in this work to create the structure that helps students know when to use AI, when not to use AI, help students reflect on their learning, use AI in productive ways. It can do a lot of good in that area.

As I already mentioned, it is a clear distinction for candidates who are applying for jobs when they can talk knowledgeably, and skillfully, ethically, and responsibly about how they do and do not use AI. They are at a clear advantage in the marketplace.

And as I mentioned as well, it's more than that. We are in the business of human transformation. I really believe that. We are helping people in our classes discover and develop into who they are going to be, no matter their age. Some of our students are 19. Some of them in dual enrollment are 15. Some of them are in their 50s. Whoever is in front of us, we are helping them transform.

And I want neighbors and community members who are able to think critically, think creatively about the problems that we are facing. And so for me, it is about teaching people to stop and assess and evaluate as we navigate our future here.

Now, some might still say that, I'm really concerned about AI. And that is a very, very valid viewpoint. So you might be here today and saying, I really don't want to teach with AI. I feel strongly against it. Well, what you might do is teach about AI. And I've

provided this link because it's an exemplar that I just came across in the last couple of days.

I've known about this organization, but they have just unveiled a statement. It's quite lengthy, which is why I didn't try to quote it here. But you can access this information. And the authors and collaborators on this project have written a piece, an essay. And the title is shown on the screen. "AI is Problematic. Why does PAIRR Use It?"

PAIRR is this very innovative project that is getting a lot of attention in the media and in the literature. It's about structuring student peer review, bringing in AI review, and then helping students reflect on those different sources of feedback and use it to enhance their writing. So I think there's a lot of potential.

And specifically in this example, they have just come out with this statement at this whole piece, this whole write up about it's problematic, and we want to see-- thank you. I see that the link just went in. Thank you so much, Norma. We want to see about why we use it. So if you hate AI, I would say talk about that with your students. That is a valid talking point to me in any conversation in this moment in time.

So that was already a lot of information. I would love to ask-- and we'll just pause here for a minute. I'm curious, what has been the most interesting so far? I haven't been watching the chat. I've seen a few things go flying by. I'm going to take a look right now. What has been most interesting from what we've shared so far?

I think due to the size of our group here today, we are not able to unmute and share comments verbally. But please do post your comments and questions in the chat and the Q&A pod. OK, so the opportunities with AI use, unequal accusations, yes. Assistive technology, good reminder, right, Denise? Hello, Denise.

Thinking about structure, which we're going to talk a lot more about here, definitely engaging citizens. We are in the human transformation business. We are. And I think we lose sight of that sometimes when our semesters get busy, when we're in the

middle of things. Yes, that is the reason I see the comment here about learning more about PAIRR. They're doing excellent work.

That's why I provided that link to you because everybody should learn more about what they're doing.

Lowering the stakes, right, Julie? Again, students are people. First of all, we want to remind ourselves of that. And the psychology of what tempts us to cheat applies to all of us. And so there are definitely decisions that we can make in our teaching and learning activities that reduce that temptation, quite frankly.

Oh, I see a question here from Barbara. Can we save that one until the end, Emily or Norma? There was a question here from Barbara Bell about Turnitin. I will gladly talk about that when we get to the end. Unequal access-- OK, good. So lots of responses coming in having that discussion about AI, absolutely.

I'm going to jump back into the slides. I see lots of good responses here, lots to think about. And that is a key takeaway right there that we have to be talking with our students about AI. Again, many of them are figuring things out on their own, but we can do a lot to support their learning and their development as citizens that I want to run into at my local grocery store.

So now, every time I give a talk like this, I inevitably find people-- and we saw them here today-- represented in the I'm still really nervous about this, or I'm overwhelmed, or I'm not sure where to start, or I-- there's a lot of people who would benefit from a brief introduction to some easy, small first steps. OK, I said easy. I'm not sure that's what I mean, but feasible. How about feasible small steps?

Now, as Norma mentioned at the very beginning, I had the incredible privilege of co-authoring a book called Small Teaching Online. It is based on Jim Lang's very successful Small Teaching. His concept is that when we have little changes that we

make in our teaching, things that are not overwhelming, don't take a lot of time, and don't require a lot of grading because that's a consideration.

But when we make those small changes based on the science of learning, what we know about how people learn, we can have an outsized impact. And I have really taken that concept and run with it because that helps my experience when I'm teaching as well. So here are a few small things that you can do to get started. If this isn't helpful for you, maybe this would be helpful for a colleague who hasn't really figured out how to approach AI in their classes.

So again, I've already explained my opinion and embrace of small teaching. If you're here today and you haven't done much yet, please take one idea from today, just one idea. Maybe you implement it this semester. Maybe you wait until the next time your class starts, whether that's a shorter term or in January. Just start small.

Now, the other kind of general recommendation that I think we have the opportunity to do is to help students discover for themselves when AI is useful and when AI is not useful. That is the discernment that employers are looking for.

I have a friend who teaches journalism. And she went to New York City this past summer and asked her colleagues in industry, what are you looking for from graduates of journalism programs? And the clear kind of synthesis answer that she got was, we want graduates who can discern when to trust their own work. When do we use AI? How do we use it effectively? When do I rely on what I know?

So let's leave them on that journey of discovery. Because if you're a parent, you know that there's only so much telling your kid what they can and should do. Sometimes they need to actually burn their hand on the stove top. OK, that was a weird analogy, but you get the idea, right? Sometimes we have to figure it out for ourselves.

And so I thought I might share my very earliest steps in my journey of discovery because it will help us think about how we can structure these for students. And then I have a couple of super practical examples from class contexts as well.

When ChatGPT was born in November 2022, in the form that we first broadly, publicly began to be aware of it, I was just as overwhelmed and terrified and nihilistic as many of us here were. And so I spent a solid six months with my head in the sand. I could not figure out what we do about AI, generative AI, and teaching and learning.

But around about May or June, I thought, you know what, I've got to figure this out. It is literally my job. And so I started doing this exact thing. I started attending these webinars, reading blog posts. It was too early for empirical research, but there were certainly a lot of people trying things, writing about things. And I started attending conferences.

And I thought, OK, the very smallest thing that I, Flower Darby, could do is to ask AI anytime I was going to google anything-- because we do, right? We google a lot of things. And now Google AI is a thing, but it wasn't then. Anytime I have a question, I'm just going to ask AI instead of googling it.

Now, I am-- I do like Google. I like the-- I mean, whatever, that's a nuanced statement too. But in general, that's the tools and the platform that I tend to use. So at that time, I decided to work with Google Bard. Now, as you may remember, that is no longer the name. Google Gemini is what we now refer to. But back then, it was Google Bard.

And I received an invitation in my email one day for teaching practices for FGWC students. And I'm all about teaching practices, clearly. And I wasn't really clear on what FGWC meant. Now, I've since learned-- and maybe some of you know, but I didn't know

in that moment. I went to Google Bard, and I said, what does FGWC stand for? And without skipping a beat, Bard said, Fighters for Windmills and Garden Centers.

We have to support these people. They are doing incredibly important work. And I went, wait a minute, I don't think that's probably what this is about. And so I old-fashioned googled it and came to find out that in a higher education context, this refers to students who are first generation and from working class backgrounds. Maybe you knew that. I did not. But I learned something that day, that opportunity to stop and question. That's the journey of discovery that I'm asking us to help our students embark on or continue on.

And so during that summer of 2023, I continued attending these webinars, and I learned about this custom GPT. I do enjoy coloring as a way to relax and clear my mind, but I really don't like adult coloring books. They're very stressful to me, all those little tiny spaces. And so I learned about this custom GPT, and I made this image. You can judge, I don't care. It's a cute kawaii cat, very simple though.

I created 10 of them. And with each one, I got a little bit more precise in my prompting. I was developing prompting skills while creating images to color. And so this was the last one that I made, kittens playing in a garden. And one day, I really was overwhelmed, and I thought, I'm going to take 10 minutes and start coloring. So I did, the leaves, the grass, the fence in the background.

I wasn't done with the picture. But as you do, I took a picture, and I sent it to my family's group chat. And I said, look, look what I'm doing! And I do have a strong AI skeptic, I would say an AI hater in my family, among my kids. And they pointed out, they said, look at that cat in the middle. What is that fifth appendage?

And my point is, I hadn't even seen it. It's funny. My husband had to make a rude joke. That's how it goes. But I hadn't even seen that fifth item on that cat in the center because I was focusing on other aspects. This is what I mean about leading students on a journey of discovery. Help them to spot the flaws. Help them to find out when AI lets them down. And I have practical steps and examples here as well for you coming up soon.

The last point that I want to make in the first steps category is to please, please be transparent with your students. I know that a lot of instructors that I work with are not really talking about AI in our classes. Well, guess what, that really sets the stage for students to use AI in ways that we may not really approve of.

So I have a few questions for you to think about. And the transparency is also about disclosing our own use. We'll get to that a little bit later. But these questions are focused on how we're talking with students and how we might be providing the guidance. So if you're not yet— I do think in some classes, some of us haven't really brought the topic of AI into our classes, whether it's ways of using it, whether it's our concerns, whether it's helping students learn about the dangers. We should be talking.

I'm going to encourage us to talk with our students. If you teach online asynchronous, this can be video responses. It can be any number of ways to communicate and interact with your students. But we should be bringing this into our classes. I really do think so.

Maybe you already have a syllabus statement. Maybe you may or may not have assignment guidance. We're going to get there here before we're done today, assignment level guidance. What are you asking your students to do with and without AI? And are your students able to weigh in? They're people too. They're looking at their future. Many of them are deeply concerned.

We can work with our students to cocreate, to get some feedback from students, to have them edit a Google Doc, just as one example to provide some input on what they think the statements and guidance should be.

But again, most importantly-- I don't know if I would say most importantly. Another consideration is to think about what your students are going to need on the job. I referenced an example from journalism. Law professors are wrestling with this. Certainly health care providers, AI is being used in, I would say, many really interesting and positive ways to improve diagnostics.

We need to be thinking about our students being next-step ready. That's a phrase that we use at Estrella Mountain. It's about whatever is next, whether it is a job or transfer to a four-year institution, or whatever it might be, help our students be thinking about what's next. And in this particular case, think about what they might need in the career that they are seeking to pursue.

So I've mentioned a few different times that I have some practical steps. And I know this is the good stuff. This is what people really want, so I'm going to jump right into this. Again, we will have time before we're done here to have some interaction and conversation. But let's get right down to the nuts and bolts, what are we supposed to do?

Well, I have two guiding frameworks for you. And the reason I have two is that we are at different places in our journey. For some of us, this traffic light analogy is very helpful. Maybe we're already using it. I certainly didn't make this up. It's been around for a little while now. But in case this is new, if you're not providing this kind of guidance to your students, I'm going to encourage us to at least give the red, yellow, green.

The red is, we're not going to use AI. Yellow is, let's use AI with caution, which is kind of where I'm at personally in my own use. Let's use this with caution. And green, we have many innovators who are go, go, go! Let's see what we can do with AI.

Now, from an accessibility standpoint, we want to make sure that we're not only relying on the colors to communicate the meaning. We can accompany these with some text as well, but the idea is to provide your students that general guidance in the syllabus, and I would argue, on individual assignments and projects as well, when should we be using AI or not.

Now, for some folks, this is a little bit more simplistic than what is helpful in this moment. So I want to introduce-- if you haven't come across it yet-- the AI assessment scale. Again, it's been around in its current form for a couple of years now. Highly helpful, very helpful, and it is a way to help us think about updating or creating new assignments, projects, and assessment of student learning.

It is not an AI-detection tool, and it is not a failsafe way to prevent irresponsible use of AI. But it does help us talk with our students, both when we assign the activity, provide the instructions, but also if we begin to think that students have used AI in a way that we weren't really hoping that they would overuse, then we can come back to this scale or something like it. There's versions out there and talk with our students about what level.

So just briefly, the AI assessment scale-- and I hear you have the QR code and another short link that you can learn more about this work. It's ranging from no AI, I'm asking you not to use AI. I use the phrase, I'm asking you very deliberately because I really, truly, in this moment, think it's extremely hard, if not impossible, to prevent students from using AI. I'm sorry, that is one of those uncomfortable truths.

But it ranges from no AI, all the way down to AI exploration, which is all about, I don't even know what you're going to do with this tool. Do something amazing. And as you can see, there's levels in between and more information available at those links.

So I'm going to walk us through an extremely practical process to use this approach, a multi-level scale-- there's other ones out there-- to update any class, for example. If maybe you have opportunity over winter break, or maybe you have the chance to update an entire class, or maybe it's just one assignment, here's some very practical steps that you can take.

First of all, we must critically analyze our syllabus. We become fond of our syllabi. They're full of so much good stuff. But the world has changed. Technology has changed. And we need to ask ourselves some really hard questions as we're critically analyzing the syllabus. And the hardest one of all, are there things in there that are meaningless or irrelevant or no longer helpful for students in an AI age? So really, take some time to ask yourself and reflect on that hard question.

And then I would say you could pick one still meaningful assignment. There's still value to a lot of what we do. And so pick one along the lines of starting small. And then think about the process and the steps that students have to undertake to successfully complete that project, paper, assignment, whatever it might be, group project, and decide where AI can be successful.

Now, I'm going to invite us to carve out time in class. If it's an asynchronous class, please record videos or provide written guidance to talk about how students can use AI for that particular assignment or activity. And specifically, the step, like, which step of the process are you going to ask students to use AI? Where will you not? And it has to make-- it has to take some class time, quite frankly, to talk about appropriate use,

where the flaws are, with students. We need that. That's part of what we're teaching now.

I'm going to invite us to structure the critical reflections. So don't just ask students to do this or that with AI. Don't do this or that with AI. But then also add on a piece, a reflection. It could be a two-line discussion post. It could be a two-line addendum at the end of a paper, for example. Did AI use help me or not? Ask your students to reflect on and respond to a question like that.

And I previewed this point earlier today. We want to model and assign transparent disclosure. If we are using AI in our own classes to help us create more engaging learning activities, discussion prompts, scenarios, we should tell our students how we're using AI. We don't want to be using AI and not talking about it. That's not how we model ethical and responsible use.

So talk about your own use of AI, what you're doing, what you're not, why you've made those choices, and assign that as well with your students so that require them to disclose. Again, it can be as simple as a single sentence. There are lots of templates that are out there now on the web about ways to structure students disclosing. And certainly, the citation bodies have official ways to cite. But I would ask you to have your students show you and tell you how they're using AI.

Now, all that sounds kind of well and good from a practical standpoint. But again, there's a lot of nuance. So just a few additional considerations before we wrap up with some really fun examples and practical examples and then we'll be ready for your questions at the end.

So first of all, you have to consider your own comfort level. We know that it's really hard to teach something that we are not confident with. So even if-- and I would argue that it's absolutely fine to have grave concerns about AI. If we're teaching today's

students, I would encourage each of us to be interacting with AI in ways that are productive and informative, from a role of being an educator.

Don't try to teach something that doesn't feel good to you. You know that if you've been teaching for longer than a year, you have to feel confident about what you're teaching. And there are small ways to begin to integrate AI if you're not very confident yet.

I'm also going to ask you to trust your disciplinary expertise and what you know about your students, your context, what they need to know. That's going to help you in that process of deciding where AI might be useful, what step of the process. Just think from your own expertise what your students need to, and that will help you make those decisions.

I will encourage us to put AI to work. It can be a really good equity partner. You could review-- you could have AI review your syllabus and say, tell me what's confusing from a student point of view, from a first-generation student point of view. You can use AI to help you teach more effectively and more inclusively. And again, I will encourage us all to let students know what we're doing with those tools.

And because so many students are uncomfortable, deeply uncomfortable to using AI-- and again, in my own local context, I was hearing about dual enrollment students not supposed to use AI at all. So from a faculty perspective, we can proactively provide an AI option or a non-AI option.

And here's a simple one, just as one example. I was observing a biology class recently, and the instructor had her students get into groups, go outside the lecture hall, take photos, and use AI using their smartphone to identify the different kinds of vegetation and such, that they were seeing the flora. But because it was a group activity, if students didn't want to use AI on their device, they didn't have to.

Generally speaking, I think it's a relatively safe bet to say that in a group of four, at least one student is OK with using AI. So that's just a simple example. Put things into group projects. In that way, not everybody has to log into AI.

And then again, we're all about helping students to document what they're doing to show their work. Some folks are asking for transcripts of the AI interactions. Some students are providing a guided document, or a template, or a worksheet that students reflect on each part of the process and talk about what they've done. Have students show their work and reflect again on whether AI was useful.

Now, let me be clear. That's extra work. That's extra work for students. That's extra work for us to grade. So that's part of the critical analysis of your syllabus. Maybe we cut some things that aren't that relevant in order to make time and grade space for these kinds of activities.

All right. Finally, I'm going to share just a handful of very practical examples from across the disciplines, and then we will wrap up with a few minutes for your questions as well. The simplest, the very simplest way that I think about teaching with AI comes from a friend of mine at University of Central Florida, Kevin Yee. I love his recommendation. And that is to assign two steps.

If we're not doing much with AI yet or we have colleagues who could use this first step, this is simple. It's about asking students to do something with AI and then asking them to do something with that because that in itself is going to structure that opportunity for students to stop and check. Maybe you allow students to use AI to help them with their bibliography or their reference or their literature search.

But then, of course, you're also going to assign them to check those references, and those sources, and those links, and make sure they are accurate. Maybe you ask students to use AI to generate an image. Maybe it's even a fun activity, an image of, for

example, dragons and medieval villages. This comes from another friend of mine, José Bowen.

Maybe you ask students to do that, but then you ask them to analyze the visual output. Assign two steps to require students to stop and think and check and verify because to me, that's a critical competency.

Now, I just actually want to put a pin in this for one moment. A few minutes, or just now, I mentioned José Bowen. I did have a resource. I'm not sure if it got into the chat because I wasn't thinking about it. But everything that I talked about regarding how students are using AI, how we can help them choose how AI is impacting thinking, my friend and author José Bowen just put out-- I literally found it this morning-- a comprehensive synthesis of emerging research on those exact topics.

And maybe if you have it handy, Emily, maybe we could put the link back in the chat again. Here, it's just a very detailed resource on what students are doing with AI, what they're not doing, what the research is finding about AI and thinking.

But there is a clear takeaway. The clear takeaway of all these emerging studies is that when we structure their use, or Boeing calls it guided AI use, as opposed to unguarded AI use, it's about us being part of the package and helping students know when and when not to use it. That is going to enhance their learning. That's pretty clear.

So here's an example of assigning two steps. And I love this. It's from a public speaking class. This professor asks her students to use AI to write a wedding toast. Pretend you're the best man or maid of honor. Use AI. You can go back and forth with AI. You can say make it funnier, weave in this anecdote. But at the end of the day, they have to give their speech, and they can only use the words that the AI generated.

They're not allowed to edit it themselves. And here's what students learn when they stand up and deliver their speech in class. They learn that it sounds like a robot write

it. This is a-- wrote it, I should say. This is a perfect example of leading students on that journey of discovery. And it's really just two steps, use AI, iterate, write a wedding speech, give it, and discover for yourselves that your own voice and your own words are better, are more human, are more effective.

But now, maybe we're beyond the two-step process. Another very common example is to make an AI sandwich. And this is a three-step process. And the common-- again, the emerging recommendation from the studies and the research is that we start-- it's three steps-- start by asking students to do the thing first. Generate the-- generate-- write an outline. [LAUGHS] Brainstorm the ideas. Put the initial material out there themselves, out of their brains.

And then they go to AI, get some feedback, get some refinement, what have I missed, spot the flaws, what considerations you use AI to give feedback. And then the bottom part of this sandwich is for the students themselves to again, continue working.

Now, you could do it the other way. You could have students use AI first, and then work with that, and then go back to AI. That's the AI sandwich. But the clear recommendation now is to start with student cognition, use AI to provide refinement, and then end with student finalization, and again, I would say reflection as well.

Another really interesting and powerful way for you to structure student use of AI comes from chemistry professors. In this example, professors asked AI to solve a chemical equation, show its work, and get it wrong. And then they ask students to go through step by step and identify where AI got it wrong. That's highly metacognitive. That requires deep and critical thinking, another way that we can use AI.

And finally, this is my last recommendation before we open it up for questions. And that is to use AI to role play, to build any kind of an interaction. There's so much

potential here and widespread application. People are using it in health care preparation classes, clinicians, beginning physical therapy students. Create the AI– you don't even need to create it, just prompt it.

Be a grumpy patient who just had this health condition, is now in the hospital, here's the vitals. And then you role play, AI, and be that patient. And my beginning physical therapy student will be trying to guide you to get out of bed and walk around the room. And you have to respond as the patient. It's a really much less expensive and lower risk way for early health providers to get some practice.

Customer service, mock interviews, so many applications for role plays and simulations. You can have fun with this in the humanities, have your students role play with characters from Shakespeare, or Jane Austen, or whatever your favorite literature of choice, or philosopher, whoever historian or historical figure. So much potential here, and it's helping students use these tools in ways that are engaging, I would argue, are more inclusive and support all learners as well.

Q&A

And so that is the end of what I have to share with you today. I would love to know now, what is one word that describes the way you feel about teaching in an AI age? Feel free to pop those questions in the chat. And then we're also going to open it up for a question or two. OK, I see excited. I see concerned, inspired, humbled, challenged, this is good, it's been great, hooray, let's experiment trying it, wonderful. Keep your words coming. And, Norma, do you have some questions for us?

I do. Your first question is, what are your thoughts about Turnitin in or other AI detection platforms?

Yes, thank you. That did come in early on. They're mixed. [LAUGHS] Right? And I don't have time to do it justice. But briefly here, I can say that it's pretty clear that AI

detection tools are really not reliable. They indicate that students are cheating with AI when that is not the case. So I don't really love them.

However, I also am thoughtful about the workload that instructors are navigating. And some educators-- I'm thinking of Anna Mills and Chris Ostro in particular-- they are developing a multi-prong or a mosaic approach, where an AI detection tool could be one part of giving guardrails to students and helping students know that there's going to be some checking. But it's not the only thing that we're using. So very, very nuanced, but I do clearly come down on AI detection tools aren't reliable and should not be the only way that we're trying to catch students.

How about building on that question and looking at the AI tools that are being integrated into the LMS for your faculty and instructional designers and the students?

Yeah. So I'm very practical. I'm a pragmatist. And when it comes to those kinds of tools, they're there. We can't evade them. We know that LMS is not the only place that AI is embedded, and it's very hard to get away from it. So I know, from my experience, that some of those tools are still in development, maybe not as effective as they're going to be in five years.

I encourage individual autonomy, instructor autonomy. Try to assess, work with your local instructional designers and folks to figure out, is AI functionality in the LMS going to be useful? It is being used really effectively and lots of courseware for example, to help students learn. So I don't really-- my personal stance is it's there. Can we take advantage of it in some ways? And maybe in other times, we try to turn it off or discourage that use.

How about a question from the perspective of academic support staff? How might instructors stay up to date on how AI is used in the real world of their discipline to help inform authentic assessment?

Yeah, great question. And again, the problem, though, is that instructors are not generally supported in given the time to attend. Because that's my answer is attend webinars like this. Go to any panel that you can find. There's industry panels. There's these kinds of events. Yours is free. That's wonderful.

I do encourage instructional support staff to do two things, to help faculty see the value of taking an hour here and there to hear from industry experts. But also, if you're in that support role, I would say that's your job too. And I find it very interesting. Go to whatever panels, read summaries and that kind of thing.

Go to conferences. I've learned a lot about what employers are looking for from the AI conferences that I've been able to attend and then bring that back to your faculty, because I would say it is part of our job as support staff, and maybe we have a little bit more time to do that, and then synthesize, distill, and share those findings.

Another question-- some students are more vulnerable to dependency and compulsive AI use. Do you have any recommendations for how to address this issue with students in online courses?

Oh, yeah. Big question. I will acknowledge that in this hour that we've been here together, I have deliberately taken a positive approach, an optimistic spin on this topic. But there is a very dark side to overuse of AI, overreliance on AI. We've already seen stories of tragedy with young people being-- yeah, so I don't want to go there.

But I heard a colleague and a friend of mine call it the seduction of AI. And that's not a term I usually throw around in positive-- or professional settings. But it is. It's too easy,

too tempting. I do think AI and online are the most problematic. It's the most problematic combination of conditions.

I will argue that doing what we've talked about today, providing transparency, guidance, opportunities to talk with students, and clear indication of where to use AI and where not, plus reminders of why they need to learn this for themselves-- there's an author, John Warner, who writes about writing and more recently, writing and AI. And I love a line from a recent post that I read. It was like, at some point, everybody's going to figure out that paying for a degree without actually learning, things doesn't make sense.

So I think part of our job now in online classes and other large enrollment classes, where it's hard to see what students are doing, is to bring that messaging. You know you need to know this in order to get the job you want. That's what students are thinking about oftentimes. So just repeating that kind of encouragement and messaging about the value of learning for themselves.

I'm guessing that's all the time we have for questions, Norma. I know you have a few wrap-up comments to make as well.

Yes, that was-- oh, my brain is in overload right now.

[LAUGHTER]

Conclusion

And I'm sure a lot of folks in our audience are in the same state in terms of that cognitive overload right now, but it's wonderful. I want to thank Flower Darby for her time today. And I want to thank our audience as well for being so engaged in the chat.

I would like to ask that our audience join us for our upcoming Strategies for Success webinar. Our next session is October 21 with Dr. Johannes-- let me see if I get this

right-- Moenius, From Experiment to Scale, Four Years of AI and VR in Remote Education. Registration is available to Every Learner if you go to the Every Learner Everywhere workshop web page.

Also, watch for registration to be opening soon for our November webinar with Luke Hobson, Beyond the Prompt, Using Generative AI to Design Better Online Learning. And our December session will be a student panel. Students from the UT San Antonio AI group will be joining us talking about co-creating the AI campus, conversation with college students. So please keep an eye out for those.

We also have-- we have this accessibility webinar series that's coming up starting October 7. Our first session is Back to Basics, Digital Accessibility Essentials. We encourage you to register. It's open now. Please consider joining us for that webinar and sharing that opportunity with your colleagues who may be interested as well.

For our audience, I want to thank Flower Darby one more time for such a wonderful and engaging experience today. I hope everybody goes back and tries that one little change in their class within this week or next week. And we ask that you just take a few minutes out to complete our survey for today's webinar using the link that we're posting in the chat for you.

And if you have something else going on right now right after this, don't worry, we will send you the link to the survey in a follow-through email within the next couple of days. On behalf of Every Learner Everywhere, our partners, thank you for being here. Thank you very much for the work that you do everyday to support your students. Have a nice day.