Writing an AI-focused Syllabus Statement

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Link to Pressbook: A Guide to Teaching & Learning with Artificial Intelligence

Reflecting on Course Objectives

1. What are your goals for student learning?
    a. Identify the key skills, knowledge, and competencies you want students to develop.
    b. What level of Bloom's Taxonomy do your course objectives target?
    c. Consider how these align with your discipline's expectations and future career requirements.
2. How might AI tools support or hinder these goals?
    a. Can AI incorporation enhance learning in your course (e.g., providing quick feedback, generating practice examples)?
    b. What are the potential drawbacks (e.g., over-reliance on AI, bypassing critical thinking processes)?
    c. Is your course focused on learning foundational ideas, or higher level synthesis and analysis of concepts?
3. What skills do you want students to develop *without* AI assistance?
    a. Identify core competencies that require independent mastery (e.g., writing, problem-solving, critical analysis).
    b. Consider which tasks should remain purely human-driven to achieve learning outcomes.
4. In what ways could AI enhance learning in your course?
    a. Explore potential applications of AI as a learning tool (e.g., using AI for brainstorming, fact-checking, or generating discussion prompts).
    b. Consider how AI might help students engage more deeply with course material.
5. How comfortable are you with AI technology?
    a. Assess your own familiarity and comfort level with various AI tools.
    b. Consider how this might influence your policy and your ability to guide students in appropriate AI use.
6. What are the ethical implications of AI use in your field?
    a. Reflect on discipline-specific concerns related to AI use (e.g., data privacy in healthcare courses, source integrity in journalism).
    b. Consider how addressing these in your course prepares students for professional practice.

Crafting Your AI Syllabus Statement: A Step-by-Step Guide

1. Determine Your Overall Approach:
    a. Based on your reflections, decide on your general stance towards AI use in your course:
        i. Prohibit all AI use
        ii. Allow limited AI use with specific guidelines
        iii. Encourage AI use as a learning tool
        iv. Determine allowable AI use for each assignment
2. Outline Key Components:
    a. Your AI syllabus statement should include:
        i. Clear Policy Statement: A concise explanation of whether and how AI can be used in your course.
        ii. Rationale: Brief explanation of why you've chosen this approach.
            1. Be transparent with your pedagogical decisions regarding AI.
        iii. Specific Guidelines: Detailed instructions on permitted and prohibited uses of AI.
            1. Consider outlining both *acceptable* as well as *unacceptable* uses.
        iv. Transparency Requirements: How students should disclose their AI use.
            1. " I choose to use [*insert name of AI model*] AI to assist me with this assignment by [*insert how you used the AI*]."
            2. Some writing styles have formal citation guidelines.
        v. Consequences: What happens if the policy is violated.
            1. Emphasize that regardless of what AI tools were/were not used, the expectation is that students are submitting work representing their *own* efforts. They are responsible for what they submit.
            2. Existing academic integrity policies explain how to address students when you suspect they are submitting unoriginal work. Use those policies- there is no need to reinvent this process.
        vi. Resources: Where students can learn more about AI and its appropriate use to promote digital literacy.
3. Draft Your Statement:
    a. Consider Tone and Language
        i. Be clear and direct, avoiding ambiguous language.
        ii. Use a tone that aligns with your teaching style and course atmosphere.
        iii. Be positive and educational rather than punitive in your approach.
        iv. Consider using "we" language to create a sense of shared responsibility.
        v. Consider explaining how you use, or don't use, AI in teaching. This models appropriate usage and behaviors as we are learning the impacts of this new technology.
4. Review and Refine:
    a. Ensure your statement aligns with institutional policies.
    b. Have colleagues review your statement for clarity and completeness.
    c. Consider potential scenarios and ensure your policy addresses them.