Tips for Creating an Asynchronous Learning Environment that Encourages Students to Apply their own Effort toward their Learning

Temple University
Center for the Advancement of Teaching

Establish an Environment that Foregrounds Presence

Students are more likely to contribute with their own voice if they feel that there is actually someone listening and responding at the other end, whether it be you as the instructor or their student peers.

- Provide timely, specific feedback on course activities, either on an individual basis or to the class as a whole highlighting significant contributions and focusing on student development.
- Include a photograph, short biography of yourself, and/or video introduction on the homepage
- Ensure your avatar in Canvas shows a picture of you.
- Create a discussion forum (or even better, a VoiceThread discussion) that asks students to introduce themselves to the group.
- Offer office hours (scheduled or by appointment) via Zoom as an option.

Make Frequent Use of Multimedia and Interactive Media

Content and activities that utilize audio and video can further establish your presence as an instructor and establish a rapport, and foster a sense of connection between you and your students and a sense of community. It also helps move people beyond communicating exclusively through text, making it more difficult for students to resort to producing content via AI.

- Record your instructor introduction as a video.
- Provide an audio or video introduction to each Unit or Module laying out its overall purpose in the course.
- Consider providing directions to assignments in audio or video form in addition to audio.
- Consider using **VoiceThread** for discussions (over Canvas Discussions).
- Consider having your students engage in social annotation activities in **Perusall.**

Foster a Culture of Authentic Engagement

The more students feel the value of what they're learning, the less inclined they will feel to use generative AI tools inappropriately. Some students will see the intrinsic interest in what you're teaching; others will need to see how having a deep understanding of course content and mastery of skills will help them reach their goals. Either way, connecting your course content and activities with questions they have independent of the course and what they hope to achieve in the short- and long-term will ensure they expend effort on their learning.

- Create discussions and activities that value individual perspectives and personal experiences.
- Let students know that you value what they have to say, their contribution is valuable to the

learning of the whole class, and that AI lacks their unique perspective.
- Include activities that encourage students to connect what they're learning in your course with their own questions and future goals.
- Use case studies, particularly those that require the use of subjective human judgment and understanding.
- Where possible, include an experiential element. Have students work on actual problems. Develop community partnerships that allow students to apply what they're learning to contemporary real-world issues.

Clearly Outline your Expectations surrounding AI-Use in your Course

Setting clear expectations about where and how students may use generative AI in your courses allows students to make informed decisions about their own learning. Be sure to emphasize your reasoning; when we clearly explain how AI can help with learning - not replace it - students can stay in control of their education while building the skills they'll need to succeed at Temple and beyond.

- Include expectations in the syllabus.
- Explain your reasoning for why you chose the policies you chose.
- Include expectations in your class overview and personal introduction.
- Repeat your expectations during the semester. Guidelines for AI use will vary from class to class, so keep reminding students of your expectations. Consider including AI use guidelines with each assignment.

Communicate the Importance of Process Over Product in Learning

In your course, emphasize that learning is about engaging with the *process* rather than producing a polished *product*. Relying on AI to create 'perfect' outputs without effort can undermine the deeper, meaningful learning that comes from grappling with challenges and making progress over time.

- Let students know that submitting work that is imperfect, unfinished, or tentative is not only acceptable but essential for their growth. Explain that these submissions give you insight into their thinking and allow you to support them in achieving the course's learning goals.
- Help students understand that difficulty is a normal and valuable part of learning. Struggling to solve problems or apply new knowledge is what solidifies their understanding and prepares them for future challenges.