

TEACHING TUESDAYS



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BELLISARIO BULLETIN



– By [Juliet Pinto](#)

How can AI tools help you build engagement opportunities for your students into your course design? In this week's newsletter, Stephanie Swindle Thomas shares how she utilizes AI as a means to co-create an impactful and effective learning environment with her students.

Any discussion of AI lends itself to a discussion of the other AI: academic integrity. Consistent, clear communication can help manage expectations and set clear boundaries around the use of AI in the classroom, as students navigate the patchwork of instructor guidelines they have this semester. In today's Canvas Cue, Danielle Harris discusses GenAI Use Icons as visual cues to provide guidance for students on acceptable uses of AI for specific assignments.

Important Items of Note

- **Bellisario College Faculty Think In** | September 12 | 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Reception immediately to follow in the Hintz Alumni Center.

Careers/Internships

- **September 2** | 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. | 262 Willard Building | Internship Information Session
- **September 3** | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | CzechMates Information Session | 224 Willard
- **September 4** | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | CzechMates Information Session | 224 Willard
- **September 9** | 5:00-6:00 p.m. | 262 Willard Building | Cover Letter and Resume Workshop with Bob Martin
- **September 10** | 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. | Bellisario Media Center | Bellisario College Involvement Fair and Ice Cream Social
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Upcoming Events

- **September 4** and **September 9** | 10:35 - 11:50 a.m. | Making Sure Disruptions Don't Derail Students' Learning
- **September 9** | 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. | [Accessibility and Belonging: Course Documents](#) | Essentials about creating accessible course materials.
- **September 9** | 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. | [Developing AI Literacy in Students](#) | Strategies to introduce AI concepts in your courses and design activities that help students reflect on appropriate and ethical uses.
- **September 9** | 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. | "AI and Authenticity: Why Fake Can Still Feel Real" | Heather Shoenberger | 100 Thomas Building
- **September 12** | 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Bellisario College Faculty Think In | Reception immediately to follow in the Hintz Alumni Center.

TEACHING TIP



AI and Radical Personalization

[Stephanie Swindle Thomas](#) | Assistant Teaching Professor

In some ways, this write-up feels a bit like a “how I spent my summer” essay. AI is everywhere, and especially on my mind. I’m reading everything I can find about AI and pedagogy—subscribing to Substack and dailies about the ever-changing landscape of advertising and PR. While this is a personal interest/passion/possible obsession, it is also necessary for my fall course curriculum. I am teaching two in-person sections of COMM450: Digital Advertising and one section of COMM471: PR Methods (Writing). Both courses rely heavily on AI integration and emerging technology, which means something different every semester. This summer, my first summer as a full-time faculty member, gave me time to reflect on my first year of teaching, attend my first AEJMC conference, and think of what I might be able to do differently (and hopefully better) this year in the classroom.



It may seem counterintuitive, but in order to get student buy-in and trust for rolling AI into my course curriculum, I doubled down on personalization at the same time. By personalization, I mean getting to know my students and engaging with them on an individual level. I want them to recognize that they are integral to their own learning outcomes as much as I am – we’re in this together. Much like the two ways people use AI, actively or passively, I encourage my students to look critically and creatively at how to push themselves and the technology beyond input-output scenarios. Rather than a passive recipient of information in class, I want them to engage in dialogue and to participate in this exploration of what AI means for them as students, future industry professionals, and adults in this new technological landscape.

Once I received my LionPATH rosters, I began adding fall students on LinkedIn. I am memorizing their names and faces, learning if/where they are interning, and following along with what interests them. I’m engaging with their posts, and they are engaging with mine. Most importantly, we enter the classroom on day one as people instead of names on a roster. Hopefully, this will expedite my extensive course introductions and serve as a shortcut to personalized course content. I use AI as part of this process, asking it for ice-breaker attendance questions surrounding advertising, consumer behavior, and related areas of interest. I plug my syllabus topics into AI and have it write thematic questions for each day, related to what the students will learn that week in class.

What I discovered is that students love talking about themselves and sharing their opinions on everything, if someone is willing to ask and to listen to their answers. These AI attendance questions range from which influencers and brands they think are crushing it to what they would do if they could run a Super Bowl ad without any constraints. While these questions are worth minimal points toward their attendance and participation grade, sometimes I get paragraphs, follow-up emails, or office visits regarding the prompts. Most importantly, they are inadvertently engaging enthusiastically with the course content and having real conversations with their classmates during our discussions. This simple AI hack to my attendance switched roll call for ROI – I say ROI because I have to invest my time in reading and responding to their posts and letting them know I read them by pivoting class content toward what I learn about them and what excites them about the topic.

Additionally, I spend plenty of time outside of class and during office hours mentoring my students (and former students). I prepare them for job interviews, help them secure internships, and brainstorm with them about their futures. I ask questions about what matters to them, what goals they have, and how I can possibly help achieve them. This process also involves AI. During these individual career and internship advising meetings, I show them how to use AI as their job-hunting concierge through a series of prompt iterations. Then, we have AI generate job interview questions for practice and source information about the industry, companies, and locations to help them think holistically about the process. I demonstrate ways in which AI benefits and hinders their ability to stand out among other applicants; I provide a cover letter template that I created to assist in their storytelling/image-making beyond AI. Although this process currently requires extensive guidance, advancements in agentic AI will streamline future sessions and allow students to improve and better customize their career journeys.

These strategies of making pedagogy personal combine to establish a sense of trust and openness beneficial to everyone. My

students know that whatever I bring to them in the classroom is in their best interest and will help prepare them for uncertain futures/career trajectories. This trust dynamic is particularly important when incorporating emerging tech/AI/new things that can cause uncertainty among early adopters. All of the tools, activities, and the recipe book I discussed in my TLT Symposium talk are part of a larger demystification of AI in the classroom and in our lives.

I get them to invest in AI and in my curriculum, and I do this by investing in them. But the most important part of this process is making it clear that I don't know everything there is to know about AI—no one does! By positioning myself as a learner, prioritizing experimentation, and sharing what I learn, we take the journey together. As we return to the classroom, it's a good reminder to myself, and hopefully to others, to prioritize individuality and customizability (when possible) and to let students understand their professor as a person, a learner, and an investment partner in their futures.

CANVAS CUE



Generative AI Icons Course for University Instructors

[PennState Ai Hub](#) | Funded by the [Institute for Computational and Data Sciences](#)

"Can I use Generative AI (GenAI) on this assignment?"

How often do you, as an instructor, receive this question? Or have you found yourself wishing that your students had asked it **before** using GenAI on an assignment?



Allowed



Limited



Not Permitted

As GenAI tools become more and more prevalent, providing guidance to students has become crucial. The [GenAI Use Icons](#) is a framework to assist Penn State instructors in communicating their policies regarding GenAI utilization in coursework. It enables instructors to clearly articulate whether GenAI tools **are or are not allowed** for specific assignments. These icons can be used to **promote transparency, ethical GenAI usage, and academic integrity** among students. They are meant to be a tool to foster conversation between students and faculty as to the expectations for successful completion of assignments.

To learn more, check out the [GenAI Icons module of the Canvas Styles Resource](#).

SHARE A TEACHING STRATEGY



Share the phenomenal things that you have been doing in your classroom! Do you have a teaching technology or strategy that you've seen succeed and would like to share in the *Teaching Tuesdays* newsletter? If so, please [share your idea](#) for an upcoming issue.