

Spring 2027 AI-Aware Teaching Strategies for Online Courses

Fully asynchronous online courses are experiencing challenges in response to growing AI capabilities and ubiquity. There are a variety of strategies you can use to encourage appropriate use, or discourage use, of AI in your classes. Some involve steps you need to take prior to the term. Others can be applied when designing your weekly low-stakes assignments or higher-stakes summative assignments.

Not all these strategies will be right for every class. Your discipline, class size, and place in the curriculum will all impact how feasible any of these choices are. Start small with something that feels manageable for your course, and consider what assignments might need to be scaled back if you add something new.

Examining your learning outcomes, determining how you want students to distinguish themselves from AI, and layering these strategies intentionally can help you create more visibility for student learning and thinking.

Pre-Term Considerations

Consider these issues as you develop (and before scheduling) your online course:

- Experiment with AI and your assignment prompts so that you have a better understanding of its capabilities and limitations. You might use the process to generate ideas for adaptations or alternatives.
- Clearly define your AI usage guidance.
 - All UNM syllabi should have clear AI guidance to provide transparency for students and clarity for educators on how AI should or should not be used in your course. Syllabus guidance also provides you and students with appropriate recourse should there be a question about academic integrity. ([see sample language](#)).
 - [Assignment-level guidance](#) on AI use can provide you and students with a higher level of clarity and transparency. It can give you flexibility to design for AI usage most appropriate for the variety of assignments students will complete.
- Should you want to consider holding scheduled synchronous checkpoint meetings or oral examinations over Zoom, be sure they are also scheduled in Banner. Mandatory scheduled virtual meeting times must be indicated when [scheduling your course](#) so that students can make informed choices when they register through the UNM portal.
- Exam Proctoring: If your course requires exams, consider scheduling [on campus proctoring](#) or [remote proctoring](#). Scheduled proctoring windows and/or any required trips to campus should be disclosed to students when they register for the course.

Low-Stakes Weekly Work

Low-stakes work allows students to practice key skills or apply key concepts. It gives the instructor a sense of how students are progressing in their learning and provides students with key feedback about whether they are on track or need to adjust their approaches to learning in your course.

Video-enhanced Assignments

Students can submit video in Canvas [assignments](#), [discussion posts](#), or essay quiz questions. Video submissions give students another way to demonstrate their understanding and explain their ideas.

- Offer quizzes or assignments with one or two essay questions that ask students to apply what they are learning, such as responding to a case or solving a problem. Have them record a walkthrough of their thinking via video or audio.

Students may not initially be comfortable with the process of recording and submitting videos in Canvas. Be sure to provide links to resources on how to record and submit videos in Canvas [assignments](#) and [discussions](#), give them a chance to practice with the Canvas tool, and give them adequate time to record.

Instructors may encounter students who are concerned about recording themselves for a variety of reasons. Anticipate the need to provide some level of flexibility, such as offering to meet with a student via Zoom.

Commonplacing and Learning Journals

Have students keep a [commonplace book](#), in which they manually copy key concepts or passages from the readings, along with related comments and questions. This could be done with paper or on a tablet, depending on your preferences. To get them started:

- Have them identify one key concept or passage from the weekly reading and copy it into a physical notebook.
- As students build entries they can create an index of themes and big ideas from the course or create annotations to help them draw together ideas and evidence.
- Students can use the same space to write short reflections on their learning and progress in the course.
- Have students snap a photograph of the page(s) and add to a discussion for collaborative feedback, or submit individually in an assignment.

Leverage Local Context Knowledge

Add elements to your discussions or assignments that draw on students' personal backgrounds, leverage unique course datasets, or UNM archival material.

Visualize a Concept

Have students select a concept to represent visually. The sequence of steps could include:

- Draw by hand a concept map or graphic organizer to represent the concept or argument.
- Add a short video reflection where a student walks through their thinking and the choices they made for their visual.

Segment Student Projects

Break down larger class projects into separately delivered portions students submit at various points in the course. Possible submissions could include:

- Formulation of a topic or thesis (consider assigning a mind map at this stage)
- An annotated bibliography of relevant sources with a short video documenting why a student chose these sources and which they left out from their database search.
- An outline of the topic

- One or more key sections
- A first draft of the assembled elements
- The final version

AI might be a tool you invite students to use at one or more of these phases. If so, how can you support students in interrogating its contributions?

Low-stakes Synchronous Meetings

Consider integrating one or more individual or group meetings with students into your assessment processes. Remember that these either need to be scheduled before the course begins so students are aware of a time/date requirement when they register or you need to provide a variety of scheduling times to accommodate student schedules (e.g. you can sign up for a 15 minute block anytime within these designated times). Whether you plan to use a scheduled time or multiple times to accommodate students' schedules, updating your [Course Information Form](#) to disclose these plans in advance is a helpful way to provide students greater transparency.

- You may be making several adjustments to your course to manage AI usage and adopting formats such as video and image uploads that could be unfamiliar to students. An early individual meeting is a good time to discuss new formats to ease student adoption.
- Arrange virtual meetings to align with project segment submissions so students can talk through their thinking, and you can provide feedback on their progress. As the project scaffolds, students are expected to incorporate feedback into subsequent segments.
- The [Appointment Group](#) feature in the Canvas calendar allows you to efficiently allocate your time while also giving students a range of times to select.

Higher-Stakes Summative Assignments

Consider these strategies for higher-stakes summative assignments that allow students to demonstrate their learning through authentic application, interaction, and reflection.

Virtual Small-group Discussions

Have students organize and record a virtual small-group discussion via Zoom. Provide them with a discussion guide, including discussion prompts and a self-assessment rubric.

Student Presentations or Video Presentations

Schedule student presentations during virtual class meetings or have them record a video and share to a discussion board. These can include Q&A portions in which presenters answer questions from you or their peers as part of the graded assignment.

Investigate an AI Annotated Bibliography

Provide students with a set prompt for AI to generate a list of sources on a specific course topic in the form of an annotated bibliography. Students then investigate the veracity and appropriateness of the sources using UNM's library databases. Use an early draft or peer review to generate additional questions for students to consider. Students' final submission should include a reflection on source accuracy and relevance, choices they made to include and exclude in the final draft, and a discussion of major gaps in the AI output. (Adapted from [the AI Sketchbook](#) and [AI Pedagogy Project](#))

Expert Interview/Field Trip

Have students identify an expert related to a course topic (a practicing professional in a related field, an elder in their community or family, a faith practitioner, a researcher or curator, etc.). Students formulate questions for an interview or conversation and arrange to meet the expert in-person or via Zoom. They can document the meeting with photos or audio recordings or a Zoom transcript. Students use the understanding gleaned from the expert as evidence in an analysis of a course concept or synthesis on how the expert's experiences illustrate or diverge from course texts. This can be adapted for a field trip by having students choose a place in their local context, devise observation questions, and document, using pictures or audio recordings, evidence that helps them answer those questions.

Further Support

You can find additional ideas for consideration in the [Amaranth's AI Sketchbook](#), [CTL AI Assignment Guide](#), or the [AI Pedagogy Project assignment repository](#). Consider scheduling a [consultation](#) with a CTL Educational Developer to chat with someone about your plan and get additional feedback.

You might also be thinking about larger scale course redesign. The CTL [Course Design Institute](#) is a great place to tackle redesigning your course, or you might consider the [Curriculum Mapping Institute](#) to think through AI's role in your discipline or program. Apply for a [Teaching Allocation Grant](#) to support research or redevelopment of your courses in light of AI and how it is impacting your discipline.

Please note that CTL and campus partners are working on providing guidance in a timely manner, but this is an evolving topic without substantial, high-quality research to inform consensus. These recommendations may change as further research comes to light. Our commitment to you is to create guidance in line with our current evidence base, the [UNM AI Statement of Ethics and Values](#), and [CTL's values](#).