Conversations with Students about Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students may feel uncertain about the ethical use of AI in a given course and academic/professional field, and instructors may find it helpful to understand how students think about the ethical aspects of using AI and how they are using AI tools as learners. Below are some recommendations for starting conversations with students about AI.

Understanding the student experience

Surveys can help instructors better understand how familiar students are with AI tools and in what contexts they are using generative AI tools.

1. Distribute an AI usage survey to understand how familiar students are with AI tools.
2. Use a survey to find out more about your students' thinking about ethical boundaries.
3. Discuss other concerns and questions students might have about the use of AI.

Discussing the use of AI

Conversations about when and how to use AI in a course can help students understand instructors' expectations.

4. Co-create expectations about the use of AI in a class and expectations regarding academic integrity.
5. Discuss how students should attribute and cite AI output.
6. Discuss when AI can be helpful to students' learning experience in your course and when it might get in the way of learning.
7. Discuss the idea of AI Literacy required for effective use of AI tools. You can find several AI literacy models in this library guide.
8. Model transparency and responsible use of AI by acknowledging your own use of AI as an instructor. There are many applications of AI (e.g., creating scenarios, drafting exam questions or rubrics etc.).

Supporting critical thinking in human-AI interactions

Reflecting on experiences with AI can support students' development of AI literacy skills.

- Students work in groups to generate a list of questions to ask the AI tool about how it works. Students then discuss the implications of the responses for academic integrity, validity, truth etc.
9. In small groups, students develop arguments to defend or prohibit the use of AI for each assignment.
- The instructor provides AI-generated work to students and asks students to analyze the example paying particular attention to aspects that are relevant to the course, such as the sources, the kind(s) of evidence, or any perceived bias.

Additional Resources

- Penn State's AI Hub offers guidelines on using generative AI at Penn State as well as education resources.
- AI Horizons Team Channel