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Adaptable AI Integration into Courses

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping both higher education and the accounting profession. As an accounting educator, I aim to help students engage thoughtfully with AI and understand both its potential and its limitations. AI is not a substitute for critical thinking, professional judgment, or subject-matter expertise, but it has the potential to significantly reshape accounting and auditing functions in the years ahead. At the same time, when introduced thoughtfully, it can be a powerful tool for enhancing student learning.

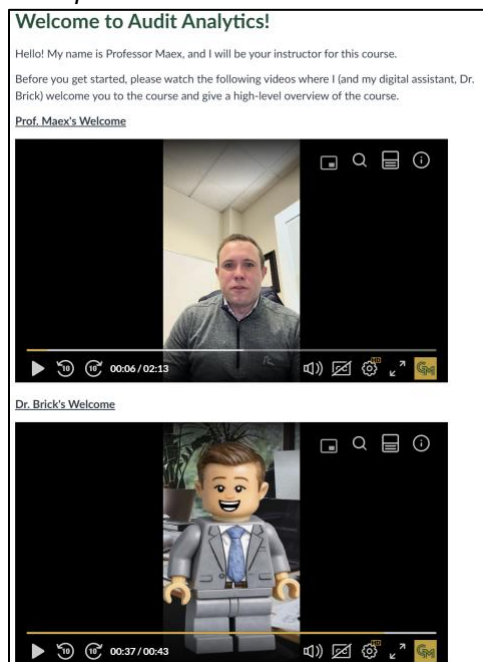
With this in mind, beyond AI-based assignments tied directly to course content, I also incorporate AI into my courses in ways that are potentially adaptable across disciplines. The overarching goal of these efforts is to help students move along a continuum – from becoming comfortable with these tools, to using them to enhance their learning, and ultimately to applying them creatively to build new solutions that address meaningful challenges in the domain of the course.

I discuss three such examples below:

Setting the Tone – An AI Teaching Avatar

At the outset of my courses, I strive to set the tone that AI is to be embraced and used creatively. To that end, alongside my personal course welcome video, I now introduce my AI teaching assistant (Dr. Brick - a Lego figurine generated from my professional headshot), who serves as my sidekick across the course Canvas site. Such avatars can now be constructed with relative ease and little expense using platforms such as HeyGen (<https://app.heygen.com/>).

Example Introduction on Canvas:



Example Course Welcome Video:



Enhancing Students' Ability to Learn Independently – Responding with Prompts

Student questions are often best addressed in ways that build the confidence and problem-solving skills needed to tackle similar issues independently in the future. AI creates a new opportunity to support that goal. Depending on the nature of the question, I often help students develop an effective prompt they can use with an AI tool to obtain the information they need. This encourages them to think more carefully about what they are asking, what background information is relevant, and how the framing of a question shapes the quality of the response. In this sense, prompting becomes an extension of critical thinking.

At the same time, the goal is not for students to accept AI-generated answers uncritically, but to use AI as a learning aid rather than a shortcut. They can compare AI responses with course materials, assess their accuracy and completeness, and identify where further clarification or human judgment is needed. Used in this way, AI can help students become more active, self-directed learners while developing a practical skill that will be increasingly valuable in professional settings.

Using AI to Create – A Capstone Project

Ultimately, I hope my students move beyond using AI simply to obtain information and toward using it to develop new solutions in accounting and auditing. To support that goal, capstone projects in some of my courses ask students to prototype novel AI-based use cases in accounting or assurance. Past projects have included tools to help small companies assess audit readiness cost-effectively, compare risk across financial disclosures, and identify anomalous transactions in large accounting datasets.

Through this work, students begin to see themselves not just as users of emerging technology, but as potential builders of it. At the same time, I emphasize that innovation must be paired with rigor. Students must consider the reliability of their proposed tool, the quality of the underlying data, the risks of error or bias, and the steps needed to validate the output before it could be relied upon in practice.