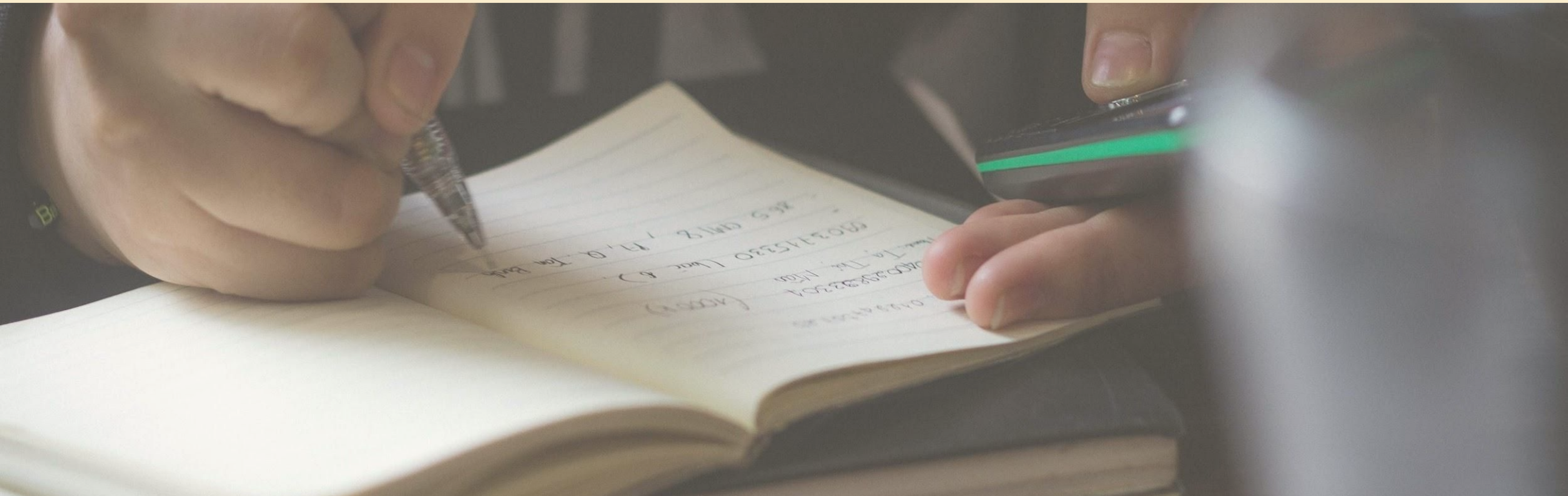# FOTL 2024: AI-Supported Assignment Design to Promote Critical Student Engagement

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TLSC160

Course context

First year
Spring semester; third in a series three, 1-credit courses (140/150/160)

Education majors
Mix of early childhood, elementary, and secondary majors

Culturally sustaining pedagogy
Academic growth, cultural competence, socio-political/critical consciousness

Field-based
Half of the course is spent observing in K-8, partner school classrooms

The
Problem....

Original assignment guidelines

Discuss how the pedagogical approaches to education of Freire, Emdin, and Ladson-Billings have impacted your own thinking about pedagogy in diverse contexts.

Reflections should be approximately 500 words and make meaningful connections among site observations, course readings, and class discussions. When directly quoting course readings, please use current, APA-style in-text citations.

Characteristics of student responses

- Strong evidence of understanding of big ideas/themes

- Some evidence of reflection related to how thinking has changed

- Limited connections between authors' ideas and observations in PreK-8 classrooms

- Limited use of references/citations to the specific pieces of research read in the course

AI is...

Undetectable	Ubiquitous	Powerful
-Detection tools exist, but they are not consistently accurate or reliable	-It's everywhere, and your students are using it	-It can synthesize large amounts of qualitative and quantitative information & has the capacity to revolutionize many aspects of life, if we harness the power appropriately
Continuously improving and evolving -Today's AI is weaker than tomorrow's	**Sometimes unreliable** - Terrible at citing sources & may generate inaccurate information	**Not human** - Operates within the bounds of the context that it is given

Mollick and Mollick, 2024

Promote students' ability to connect course topics with field-based learning experiences?
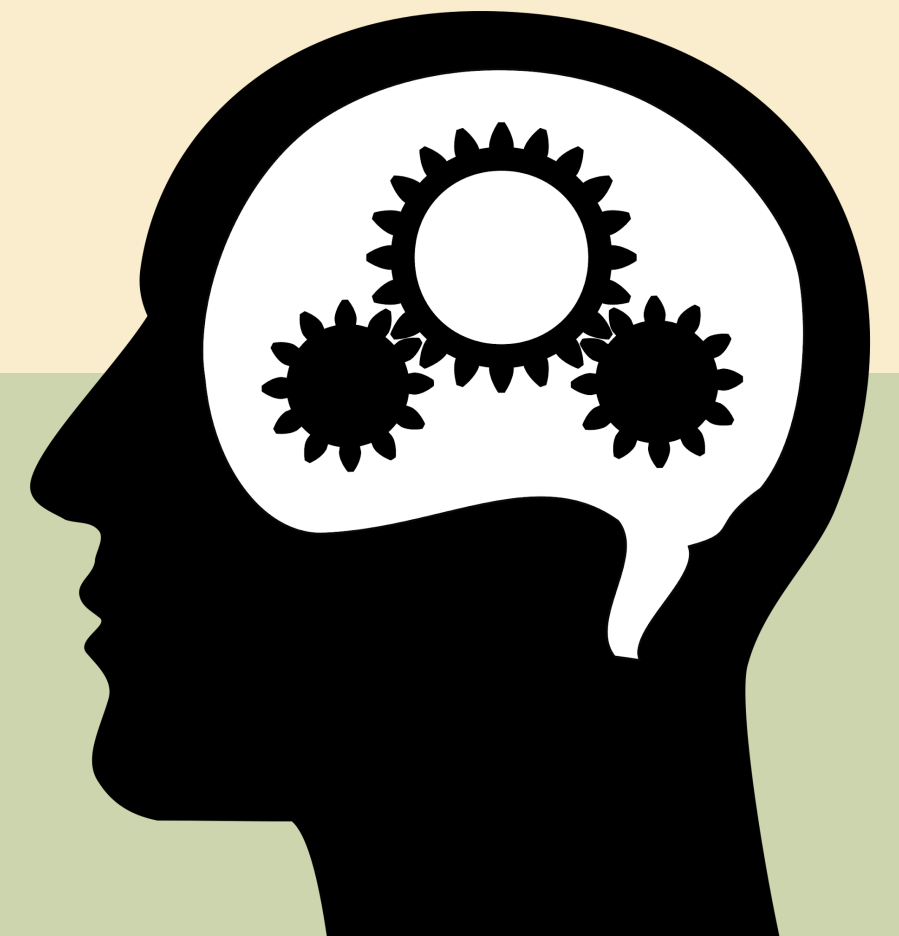
How could I use AI to...?

Critically consider the quality of AI-generated texts?

Revised Assignment

Support students' close reading of course texts?

Examples of student work:
Revised assignment

systemic inequalities that may hinder their learning. ~~His~~ Freire's emphasis on dialogue, problem-posing education, and the development of critical consciousness resonates with me deeply, especially after my placement at Swift Elementary this semester. In Ms. Dones' classroom, it is extremely evident that the teachers see every student as a vessel of knowledge, experience, and creativity. In each discussion, Ms. Dones and her teacher-aids ask students about what they know and how they feel rather than solely talking "at" them. Before reading this article and observing classrooms in sequence two, I did not understand the significance in fostering a sense of equality between the teacher and student. Since most of the classrooms I have learned in demonstrate the traditional teacher-student dynamic, I could not fully grasp the setbacks to the banking method or ways to combat them. However, reflecting back, I remember feeling a deeper and more trusting connection with my teachers who would ask for feedback and encourage frequent conversation. Overall, Freire's ideas and my experiences in Room 108 encourage me to create learning environments where students feel empowered to question, critique, and transform the world around them.

importance of cultural competence and academic excellence in education. Ladson-Billings argues that educators must recognize and build upon the cultural strengths and assets that students bring to the classroom. In diverse contexts, this means affirming students' cultural identities, challenging deficit perspectives, and providing opportunities for academic success that are relevant and meaningful to students' lives. Ladson-Billing mentions, "By permitting students to use talk-story, a language interaction style common among Native Hawaiian children, teachers were able to help students achieve at higher than predicted levels on standardized reading tests." (Ladson-Billing,1995, p.467). This quote further supports the idea that bringing in cultural competence in the classroom can help students to excel academically. This information has evolved my pedological approach by giving me a better understanding of the advantages of incorporating cultural strengths to connect students to the classroom. One example of this approach I observed in my Pre-K classroom is that it was bilingual. The teacher would switch between English and Spanish throughout the time I was in the classroom. Most of the students in the class were native Spanish speakers learning English. However, there were a few students who were native English speakers learning Spanish. The native Spanish speaker students were able to succeed when Spanish was used first and then the English was used and vice versa for the native English speakers. This method connected the two languages to show the relationship between concepts to help students better learn the new language and material. Native Spanish

students. Emdin's approach challenges me to constantly reflect on the cultural responsiveness of my teaching practices and to seek out ways to authentically connect with the diverse identities and experiences of my students. Reading Emdin's work made me much more aware of how teachers' biases and views about their students can negatively affect how they teach. Before reading his article, I knew that we all have biases and that they can be harmful but I hadn't put much thought about how a teacher's perception of their students can impact the learning of these students. Emdin provided a few examples of where teachers held back from sharing certain things or using tools in science class because they thought that sharing personal stories would make them seem weak or the students would use the tools in violent ways. Emdin writes about how this is harmful towards the students because the teachers aren't putting their full effort into teaching because they are either scared or do not like their students. Emdin stressed the importance of self-reflection for teachers so that they recognize how their biases affect their teaching."The work for teachers now becomes developing the self-reflection necessary to deconstruct the ways that media messages, or other teachers' negative (often exaggerated) stories, and their own need to be the hero affects how they see and teach students" (Emdin). I find this quote to be very important and made me self-reflect on my own biases, as well as negative stories I have heard about teaching "troubled" kids. I now know more about the harmful ways our biases can impede education in the classroom and the importance of being aware of this. In my classroom observations, I was in a first grade

classroom. I don't plan to teach elementary school so it was an interesting environment to be in. Going in, I definitely had some preconceived notions about how the kids would act and assumed the classroom would be disorderly. I was surprised by how calm and respectful the kids were and it was definitely not what I was expecting. If that was my first day on the job as an elementary school teacher, my biases would have negatively affected the environment in the classroom as I would've expected the students to be crazy and unorganized, resulting in me becoming frustrated and possibly strict.

Example of student work (con.)

Questions to consider...

- Who is using the AI tool- teacher? student? both?

- What aspects of the assignment play to AI's strengths? its weaknesses?

- What aspect(s) of the assignment demand metacognition?

- How can AI scaffold students' ability to tackle challenging aspects of an assignment?