

Welcome to another deep dive. Today, we're gonna be looking at how college professors are thinking about AI in their teaching. Yeah. And, you know, instead of just, like, the doom and gloom headlines about cheating and robots taking over, we've got this transcript from, like, a real faculty book group that's meeting to actually, like, discuss AI in education. Their book group is called Teaching with AI.

And it's fascinating to see how they're, like, wrestling with these questions that I think all of us are dealing with in our own classroom. Right. Like, is AI a threat, or is it a tool? How do we even begin to, like, wrap our heads around this stuff? And one of the things that really struck me reading this transcript was this idea of collaboration over replacement.

Oh, yeah. Instead of seeing AI as, like, this thing that's gonna come in and, like, steal our jobs, what if it actually makes us better teachers? You know, there's this great quote from one of the professors in the transcript where they say, AI excels at efficiency, crunching data, spitting out answers. But then they go on to say that, like, real thinking, the kind that leads to breakthroughs, actually thrives on what they call serendipity and inefficiency. Yeah.

Like, those moments where you get lost in a thought, you wander down a rabbit hole. And you knew you come out the other side with, like, a whole new perspective. Exactly. And it made me think about, like, this whole culture of productivity that we're all caught up in right now. Like, we're always trying to do more with less time.

And this professor actually brought up this book called The Slow Professor, which is all about, like, pushing back against that and really embracing, like, the value of slow learning. Right. Like, sometimes the best learning happens when you're not rushing, when you're actually taking the time to wrestle with an idea. And it made me wonder, like, are we even allowing students the space to learn slowly anymore? It's like we're so focused on getting them to the finish line that we forget about the journey.

Exactly. And I think AI is really forcing us to reexamine what we truly value in education. Because if a machine can spit out a perfectly formatted essay in seconds, like, what does that mean for how we teach writing? How do we assess learning? It's like the whole game has changed.

And it's not just our students who are on this steep learning curve. Right? I mean, we as educators need to figure this AI thing out too. It's like we're all back in school again. It really is.

One professor in the transcript made this great comparison to when Wikipedia first came out. Remember, like, everyone was freaking out. Yeah. Saying it would be the death of research. Oh, yeah. And now it's like a standard tool, but we had to learn how to use it effectively.

Teach our students how to evaluate the information. Right. It feels like we're at that same point with AI. So it's about developing AI literacy, not just for our students, but for ourselves too. We need to understand the capabilities and limitations.

And how to spot the BS. Because let's be honest, AI can be pretty good at sounding authoritative even when it's making stuff up. Oh, yeah. And this group had a whole discussion about, like, the ethical implications of using AI detection software. You mean those programs that claim to be able to tell the student used AI to write their paper?

Yeah. But the technology is still pretty unreliable. And they were talking about, like, imagine accusing a student of cheating based on a program that's known to have, like, a high rate of false positives. I mean, that's a huge can

of worms. Right.

Like, it really makes you think about how we define academic integrity in this new world. And it also brings up this whole issue of trust. If our students feel like we're constantly suspicious of them, always looking for ways to catch them using AI. It creates this, like, adversarial dynamic that's just not conducive to learning. One professor shared the story from their class that really stuck with me.

A student basically said, if I know my professor isn't even reading my work, why should I put in the effort? Wow. Yeah. It's a tough pill to swallow, but it highlights how important it is to address student perceptions and motivations. It's a good reminder that sometimes the so called AI problem might just be exposing existing cracks in our teaching practices.

Exactly. Maybe AI is actually an opportunity to address those cracks head on and build a stronger foundation for learning. And, you know, one thing that surprised me in this transcript was how AI could actually help us understand our students better. Okay. Now this is where things get really meta.

Right. Like, these professors were talking about using AI to analyze student work, not just for grading, but to get insights into, like, how they're thinking. It's like getting a window into their brains. Yeah. Imagine being able to see the patterns in a student's process, the way they approach a problem.

And then they were talking about these, like, conversation scripts where you can actually see how students are interacting with AI. Oh, yeah. The questions they ask, the way they respond to feedback. So it's like eavesdropping on their internal dialogue as they learn. It really is.

And I think this could be incredibly valuable for us as educators. So instead of just seeing the finished product, we could actually understand the journey they took to get there. Exactly. And could this help us identify learning gaps that we might have missed? Or, like, tailor our instruction to different learning styles?

We could even use AI to personalize feedback in ways that were never possible before. Right. It's like AI could become a partner in the learning process, not just a grading tool. But there's also that issue of trust we talked about before. Right?

Absolutely. If students feel like their interactions with AI are being monitored and judged, it could stifle their interactions with AI are being monitored and judged, it could stifle their creativity and willingness to experiment. It's a delicate balance. It really is. Yeah.

We want to use these tools to support student learning, but we also wanna respect their privacy and autonomy. And this goes back to the need for transparency. Right? Like, if we're using AI to analyze student work, we need to be upfront about it. Yeah.

Explain how it works, what we're looking for, and how it benefits them. No more hiding behind the curtain of the algorithm. Exactly. It's about building trust and open communication. And speaking of trust Yeah.

One professor brought up a really interesting point about how AI could actually help us address some of those anxieties around cheating. Oh, yeah. I thought we're just talking about how AI makes cheating easier. Well, it can, but it can also force us to rethink our assessments altogether. Like, if a machine can write a decent essay in seconds, maybe we need to move beyond asking students to simply regurgitate information.

So instead of focusing on the output, we focus on the process of learning. Right. Design assignments that require critical thinking creativity, problem

solving skills Right. That AI can't easily replicate. I love that.

Instead of trying to outsmart the machines, we're raising the bar for what it means to learn. Exactly. And it might also mean letting go of some of our old assumptions about what good work looks like. Like, if a student uses AI to generate ideas or organize their thoughts, is that really cheating? Or is it just a new way of using a tool?

Like using a calculator for math. It doesn't replace the need to understand the concepts, but it can make the process more efficient. Exactly. And that's why this conversation about AI and education is so fascinating. It's not just about technology.

It's about pedagogy. It's about reexamining our goals as educators and finding new ways to help students thrive in a rapidly changing world. So we've talked about, like, the big ideas, the ethical dilemmas, but how are these professors actually using AI in their classrooms? Like, give us the practical stuff. Yeah.

So they started getting into specifics about the tools they're experimenting with. And one that came up a lot was Copilot. Copilot. Like, the AI coding assistant. What are history professors doing with that?

Right. It's known for code, but it's actually a pretty versatile Mhmm. Platform. And the version they're using within the university is designed so it doesn't feed student data back into its training model. Oh, so it addresses some of those privacy concerns we're talking about.

Exactly. They also talked about NotebookLM, which is this cool tool where you can, like, upload documents and basically have a conversation with them. Wait. You're saying I could upload, like, a stack of student essays? Yeah.

I have AI give me, like, a thematic overview? Yeah. You can ask it to summarize, pull out key themes, even compare different texts. That would save me hours of grading. Maybe.

But remember what we said about not relying on AI to replace our own judgment. It's a tool for analysis, not a substitute for actually reading those essays yourself. Right. Right. I got carried away there.

But it's still pretty amazing what these tools can do. Oh, absolutely. And get this notebook. LM can even generate podcasts from your materials. Hold on.

AI that makes podcasts about AI in education. Now that's meta. It's a wild world we're living in. But you know what really struck me was that these professors weren't just, like, blindly adopting these tools. They were talking about the importance of scaffolding.

Scaffold them. Yeah. Like, breaking down assignments into smaller steps so students could learn how to use AI effectively and ethically. That makes sense. It's like you wouldn't just throw a student in a chemistry lab without any instruction and say, okay.

Go experiment. Exactly. It takes time to develop those skills, that critical thinking muscle. And this scaffolding approach could also help with, like, the cheating issue. Right?

If you're Mhmm. Asking students to demonstrate their understanding at each step, it's much harder to just rely on AI to do the whole thing for you. Exactly. It's about using AI to enhance student learning, not replace it. The professors also talked about giving students more choice in their assignments, like letting them pick their own essay topics within certain guidelines.

Yeah. One professor said she noticed a huge difference in student engagement when she started doing that. They were more invested in the work because they

had a personal stake in it. And it also allows us as instructors to, like, tailor our feedback to really meet students where they're at. And, of course, they talked a lot about the importance of having, like, open and honest conversations with students about AI.

Not just laying down the law. Right. But really discussing the ethical implications, the challenges. One professor even suggested having students help create the course policies around AI use. I love that idea.

It gives students agency, makes them feel like they're part of the solution, not just the problem. So where does all this leave us? I mean, it's clear that AI is gonna change education, but what does that future look like? It's still unfolding, but I think this book group conversation gives us some clues. It's not about AI replacing teachers.

It's about AI empowering teachers. It's about using these tools to deepen our understanding of how students learn to personalize instruction to create more engaging and equitable learning experiences. But it's also about being mindful of the potential pitfalls. Right? Oh, yeah.

For sure. We need to be critical. We need to prioritize human connection, and we need to constantly be asking ourselves, is this serving my students? Is this upholding my values as an educator? And remember, you're not alone in this journey.

There's a whole community of educators out there grappling with these same questions. Talk to your colleagues, experiment, share your successes and failures, and let's figure this out together. That's a great note to end on. So to all of you listening, as you navigate the wild world of AI and education, remember to stay curious, stay connected, and keep learning. Thanks for joining us on this deep dive.