
AI as a Collaborative Partner

Developing Liberally Educated Students Through Research





The Essence of **Liberal Education**

“What does it mean to be a liberally educated person? ... we use these words to describe an educational tradition that celebrates and nurtures human freedom.”

William Cronon, “Only Connect...”

Liberal Education: Beyond Checking Boxes



Nurturing Freedom

Education that celebrates human freedom to think and grow



Habits of Mind

Ability to talk to anyone, listen carefully, solve problems



Beyond Skills

Developing confidence to engage with ideas

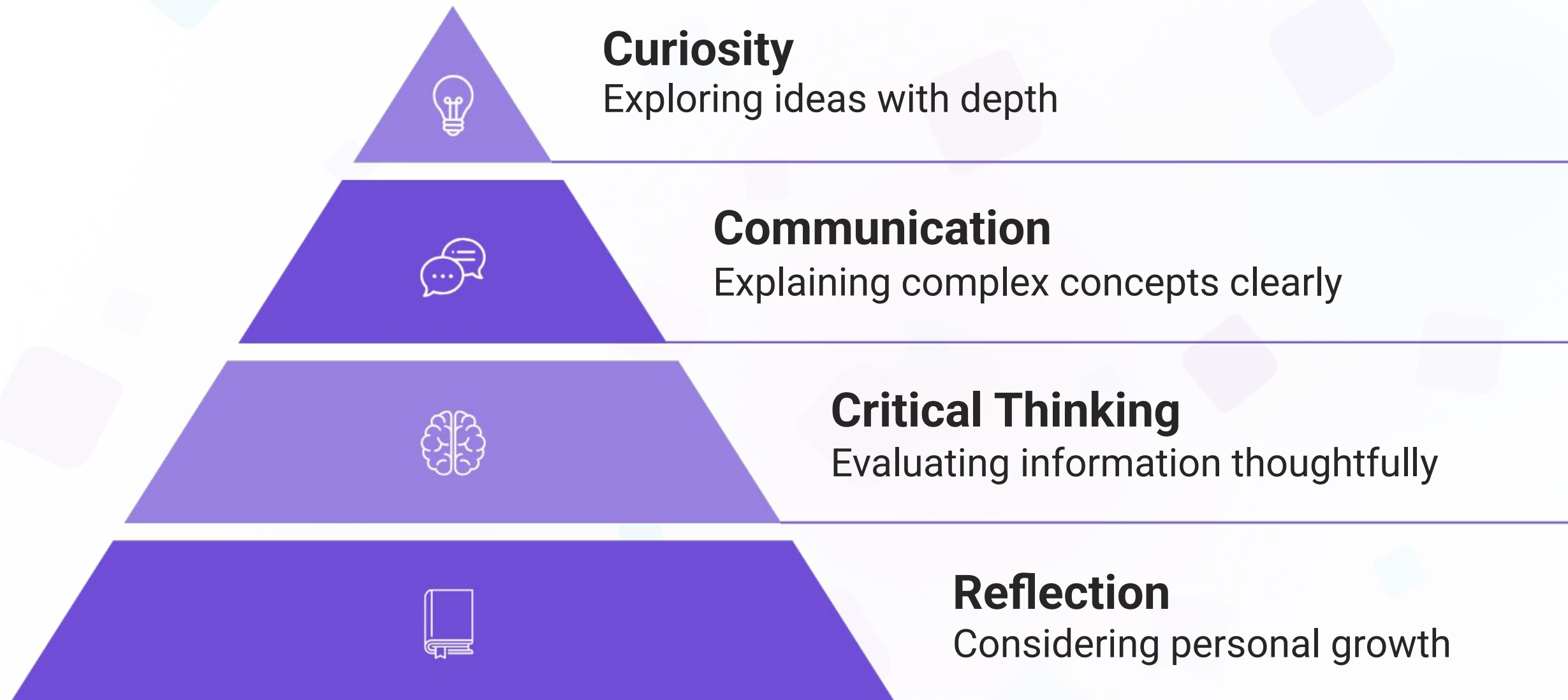


Domain **Expertise**
+ AI **Enablement**
+ Human **Excellence**

Ultimate Solution



Course Philosophy: AI as Collaborator



Purpose & Design

Course Philosophy:

Goal wasn't to teach AI but to build habits of mind

AI positioned as collaborator, not shortcut

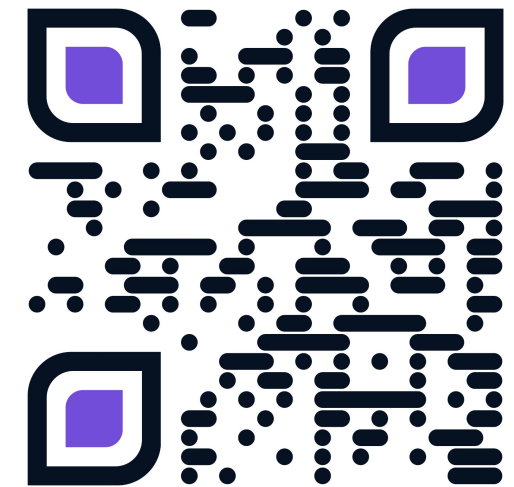
Course Structure:

Research Project with dual components:

- **Deliverable:** The polished final product
- **Logbook:** Documentation of process and reflection

Inspired by TLWAI last year: "Combining Reflection and AI for Better Research Papers"

[Download the Research Project Framework](#)



Bad Prompt Activity



Start with Poor Prompt

Students begin with ineffective AI query



Improve Conversation

Learn to refine questions for better results



Share Chats

Submit conversations in logbook

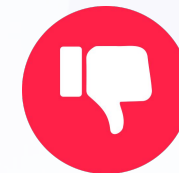


Receive Guidance

Instructor shows alternative approaches



Effective Evolution



Ineffective Evolution

Poster Conversation

Create Research Poster
Prepare academic content for presentation

Practice with AI
AI asks questions about research

Respond to Questions
Student explains research clearly

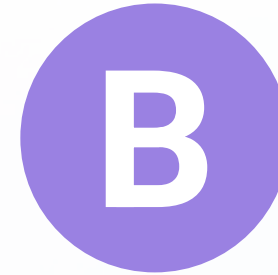
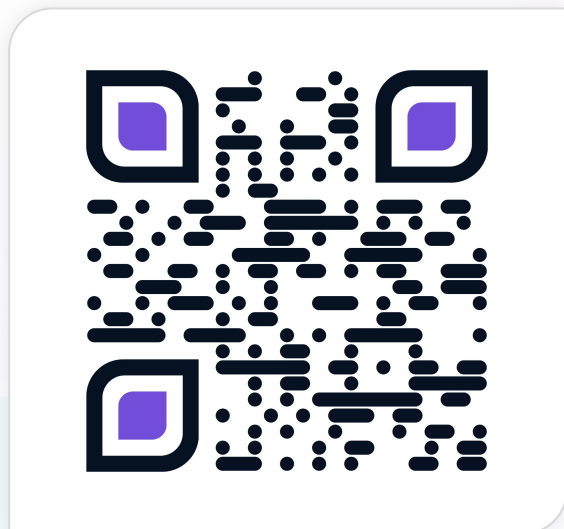
Receive Feedback
AI offers suggestions for improvement





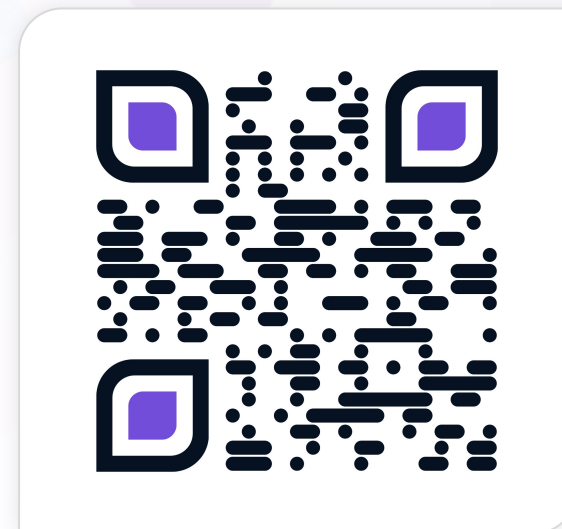
Bad Prompt Challenge

Start with a bad prompt and
focus on the process



Rehearse, Reflect, Refine Challenge

Experience how AI can help someone
think about their work





Let's Debrief



Student Reflections

Research Enhancement

For research, it really seems to streamline the whole process and take the mundane work out of the project so I can focus on implications and improving the work overall.

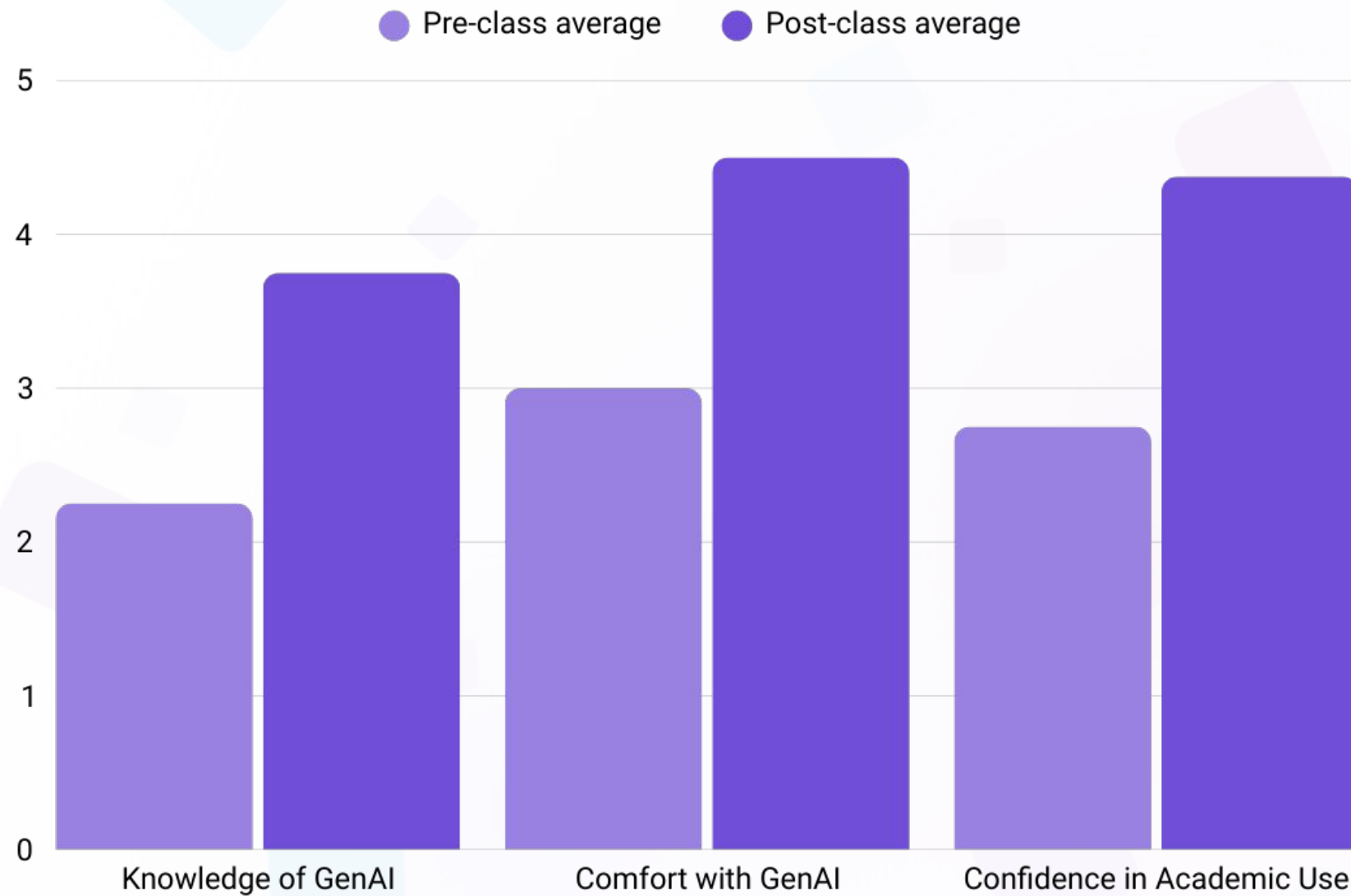
Balanced Approach

The logbooks helped reign me in my use, reminding me to use it as a resource, not a supplement.

Confidence Boost

I'm more confident in my ability to ask the right questions, I feel more excited about the possibilities ahead.

Measurable Growth



Key Findings:

- Knowledge of generative AI increased **by 67%**
- Comfort with AI tools improved **by 50%**
- Confidence in academic AI use grew **by 59%**



Literacy & Flexibility **Build** **Confidence** to Experiment and Explore

- Development of AI Workforce ready students is critical
- Multiple models gives students capabilities to develop and engage new ideas
- AI use is deepening students' critical thinking
- Collaborating with humans and AI builds confidence and enables continuous learning



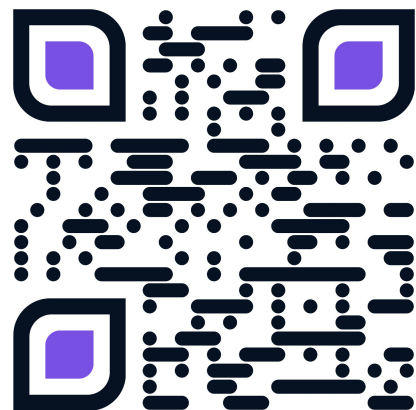
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Thank You
Connect with US!



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