FLO Friday: Mindfully Using Technology in the Classroom

Case Study Exercise Prompts

Table of Contents

Case Study Group 1: Mindful Technology

Objective: Examine the impact of mindful technology integration on student engagement and learning outcomes in a university classroom setting.

Background: In a large introductory course at a university, instructors faced challenges related to student distraction from personal device use during lectures. As a result, student engagement was significantly impacted.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What strategies could be implemented to address the issue of distraction, including the establishment course guidelines that sets clear guidelines for technology use?
2. How effective are interactive tools and structured activities in promoting active participation?
3. What role may scheduled breaks and reflection sessions play in enhancing student focus and accountability?

Group 1 Notes & Discussion:

- Include guidelines of when AI use is acceptable with exemplars
- Interactive tools and structured activities are helpful to encourage active participation. However, not all learners will have a preference to use ed tech tools, they may not have the hardware or software required, and they may lack the foundational tech skills to use the ed tech.
- Instructors may also have classes for which there are remote synchronous learners and face to face synchronous learners. Using ed tech needs to be carefully considered so that all learners have equitable access.
- Establish expectations with learners. If they help create the expectations, there is greater likelihood of them being more accountable.
- It is possible to make a lecture format more interactive for learners. Something as simple as posting a graphic organizer or notes with spaces for learners to fill in ideas will help them engage with the content and the lecture.
- Taking breaks, even short ones to stretch etc are important for any delivery modality.
- Instructors need breaks too! Talk for 15 minutes, take a short break to stretch, move, close your eyes and rest, check messages etc. can be effective.

- If breaks are incorporated into lectures, whether those breaks utilize ed tech or not, will encourage retention because learners will have to access what was being learned prior to the break.

Case Study Group 2: Student Privacy

Objective: Investigate the challenges and best practices for faculty in safeguarding student privacy in an increasingly digital learning environment.

Background: A university recently implemented various online tools for course management and communication. Faculty members became concerned about student privacy regarding data collection, sharing, and storage practices of these platforms.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What are the potential risks to student privacy posed by common educational technologies, such as learning management systems, video conferencing tools, and data analytics?
2. What role does faculty play in understanding and mitigating these privacy risks, and why is it important to select tools with robust privacy policies?
3. What strategies can faculty employ to protect student information, including anonymizing data, using secure communication channels, and educating students about privacy rights?
4. What recommendations can be made for creating a culture of privacy awareness among faculty and students to ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards?

Group 2 Notes & Discussion:

1. When recording classes and also offering the classes by live Zoom, with cameras that also focus on students - students have raised privacy concerns. Just screen share and don't use the cameras.

   How much data do students have to put out there (e.g., name, email address, birthdate). Therefore can be better to only use the institutionally-approved tools.

2. Explain to students why you are choosing something that requires putting information in. Example discussed - have students enter a fake birthday and maybe even a changed name in software that is critical practice but not required for assessment.

Case Study Group 3: Technological Alternatives

Objective: Explore the ethical considerations and practical strategies for offering alternatives to students who are hesitant to share their data with educational technology platforms.

Background: A college adopted a new online learning management system that requires extensive data input from students, including personal information and academic performance metrics. Some students expressed discomfort about sharing this data due to privacy concerns and potential misuse.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What are the implications of mandatory data sharing on student trust and engagement in digital learning environments?
2. What role does faculty play in addressing these concerns by providing alternatives that respect student privacy while still meeting educational objectives?
3. What potential alternatives exist, such as offline assignments, anonymous participation options, or the use of privacy-focused platforms?
4. What recommendations can be made for establishing clear policies and communication strategies that reassure students about data privacy while offering viable options for participation?

Group 3 Notes & Discussion:

- Loss of trust which can lead to reduced participation and engagement
- students may not be honest.
- introverts may have a hard time contributing.
- Faculty should respect the adult learner and provide alternatives. Deeply reflect if the information is actually required
- Faculty can find an alternative to storing this information other than the LMS. Ask students how they would like to provide the information.
- Number 4
    - be clear about where the data is stored (ie BrightSpace, D2l, is stored in Canada only)
    - be clear about who has access to the information, including the students
    - tell them how long the data will be stored for

Case Study Group 4: Anonymity & Pseudonymity

Objective: Investigate how providing multiple engagement methods, including anonymous participation and the use of pseudonyms, can support students uncomfortable with sharing personal data on educational platforms.

Background: At a university, faculty noticed a reluctance among some students to participate in discussions on a new online technology tool that required real names and personal data. This hesitation hindered overall class engagement and discourse.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What is the impact of anonymity and pseudonymity on student participation and comfort levels in online learning environments?
2. What role does faculty play in facilitating options for anonymity and pseudonymity while maintaining meaningful interactions?
3. What various strategies can be implemented for anonymous or pseudonymous engagement, such as discussion forums, polls, and peer reviews?
4. What recommendations can be made for creating a supportive culture that respects privacy while promoting active engagement through alternative participation methods?

Group 4 Notes & Discussion:

- some students will not participate in discussion if they have to use their real identity - does anonymity encourage honesty, or will people tend to be unkind.
- can be a significant challenge if a student shares troubling information, and you as the instructor have no way of connecting with them
- Is the issue that instructors are struggling with engagement?
- Examples of tools are Mentimeter and Padlet
- more honest… not being judged.
- #3 - exit tickets, follow up the next day on the feedback received
- code of conduct, set expectations on the discussion and how the instructor will follow up
- https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule

Case Study Group 5: “Why” of Technology

Objective: Explore the importance of faculty clearly communicating the rationale behind using specific technological tools in the classroom.

Background: At a local college, faculty adopted a new collaborative tool for group projects. However, many students expressed confusion and reluctance to engage, questioning its necessity and relevance to their learning experience.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What are the effects of unclear communication regarding the purpose of technological tools on student engagement and learning outcomes?
2. What is the faculty's responsibility in articulating the benefits of these tools, such as enhancing collaboration, improving organization, and facilitating feedback?
3. What strategies can be employed to effectively convey the rationale behind technology use, including orientation sessions, transparent syllabi, and ongoing communication?

Group 5 Notes & Discussion:

- Unclear communication can lead to student misconceptions about expectations and therefore impact student engagement/learning.
- Allow students to ask questions and engage them in a two way conversation around the rationale behind technology use.
- Be transparent with students about your familiarity with the tool (e.g., is it a new tool you are trying or one you have previous experience with). Provide students with reflection/feedback on how the tool was previously used within your classroom.

Case Study Group 6: Student Data in Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Objective: As educational institutions adopt artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, faculty members must grapple with the ethical implications of entering and using student data. This case study encourages educators to critically examine the responsibilities that come with leveraging AI in their teaching practices.

Background: Imagine a faculty member in a university department considering an AI platform that analyzes student performance to personalize learning experiences and feedback on assessment. Faculty must confront ethical questions surrounding the collection, use, and storage of sensitive student information.

Key questions to explore include:

1. What ethical concerns arise from collecting and entering student data into AI systems? Is this data used to train the AI? How is it shared? Privacy of student identification (names, emails, student numbers, location). Their intellectual property as the creator of the document/assignment.

2. How can faculty ensure informed consent from students regarding the use of their data? Ensure you understand what the AI is using and ask the students directly. Ensure they know exactly what is being provided to the AI system and how exactly it is being analyzed and why. Allow to opt out.

3. What measures can be implemented to protect student privacy while using AI tools? Ensure that no personal data is required for login or is removed from information that is input into any of these systems. Only use systems that are vetted by your institution. Or don't use AI

4. In what ways can faculty engage students in conversations about the ethical implications of their data being used in AI applications? Help them to understand how exactly the systems work and where the data is stored and how it is used. Provide examples (good and bad) so students can determine for themselves.

Group 6 Notes & Discussion:

- Provided following the questions above in red coloured font.