

Lilly Conference 2026

The 2026 Lilly Conference emphasized **AI in the classroom**, with sessions spanning pedagogy, ethics, engagement, assessment design, and practical classroom use. A unifying theme was balancing innovation with humanity in teaching:

“Will you still respect me if I’m not overwhelmed?”

Keynote Speakers

- [Todd Zakrajsek](#) – Teaching and learning scholarship
- [Andrew Estrada Phuong](#) – Applied educational strategies
- [Bonni Stachowiak](#) – *Teaching in Higher Ed*

Igniting Curiosity with AI-Crafting Questions that Engage

Lynn Meade – University of Arkansas

Classroom Uses

- AI-generated self-portraits for student introductions
- AI-assisted problem solving, followed by critique
- Structured debates with or against AI responses
- Rough drafts with required student defense or revision
- Ask AI to debate students using an assigned persona

Tools

- [Riffbot.ai](#) (Learner version – reflections)
- [Colleague.ai](#) (K–12 focused platform)

Books

- [How Humans Learn](#) – J. Eyler (2018)
- [Homo Curious: Curious or Interested?](#)

AI as a Teaching Partner

Amy Özlem Sisman – Brazosport College

Notes

- Ethical, transparent, and critical AI use
- Explicit discussion of limitations and bias
- Scaffold complex learning tasks
- Support formative feedback and practice
- Emphasize process over product

From AI to Engagement: Teaching Strategies for Today’s Learners

Clemenson, Smith, Evans – Minnesota State University

Strategies

- Write prompts for non-expert learners
- Teach students to vet AI-generated information
- Students use AI to design assignments aligned to outcomes
- Ask AI to review your course as a QM reviewer

Risks

- Masked skill gaps
- Bias
- Privacy concerns
- Unequal access

Activity

- *Keep Learning Human*: Students generate content questions with AI; instructor addresses them in lecture

A.R.I.S.E. with AI: Scaffolding Reflective and Engaged Learning

Amanda Jozkowski – Towson University

Common Student Errors

- Vague prompts
- Missing context
- Overreliance on AI phrasing
- Skipping verification

Prompt Engineering

- Scaffold difficult concepts into smaller steps
- Assign AI a role (tutor, professor, expert)
- Add disciplinary context (nurse, mechanic, author)
- Ask AI what it needs from the student to succeed

AI-Resistant Teaching

Ashley Evans – Valencia College | [Teach AI Ready](#)

Assignment Design

- Add layers of context and specificity
- Require unique, verifiable evidence
- Use local, current, or course-specific variables

Phased Work

- Data, Plan, Action, Results

Beyond Text

- Flowcharts, infographics, comics
- Video/audio
- Handwritten or physical artifacts

Assessment: SHOW ME!

- Live check-ins or Zoom defenses
- Video demonstrations
- Version history and process documentation
- Oral explanations and revisions

Tools

- Use AI to review syllabi for structure, gaps, and bias
- [HeyGen AI](#) for short videos