LUMEN LEARNING

Instructor Guide Supplement

Messaging for students: value of practice, AI use, purpose of assessment

Lumen's courses are designed around our mission to support meaningful learning and student success for all learners. Central to this work is a strong emphasis on formative assessment and feedback. Across our courses, students engage in frequent, low-stakes practice—such as try-its, self-checks, activities, and quizzes—intended to build understanding, surface misconceptions, and guide improvement while learning is still in progress.

Our learning outcome-aligned quizzes, in particular, can provide valuable insight into where students are confident and where uncertainty remains. At the same time, online quiz results alone may not fully reflect student understanding. As new forms of external assistance, including AI, become more widely available, we've heard from our partners that additional guidance is needed—particularly around how to talk with students about AI use in ways that are transparent, constructive, and grounded in learning. This supplement to our Instructor Guides is designed to support you in those conversations, helping you encourage responsible tool use while keeping learning meaningful.

Consistent messaging across a course helps students understand the purpose of assessments for learning and their role in the learning process, building trust. This guide provides student-facing language to support transparent conversations about AI use, learning expectations, and the importance of practice. The language is flexible and can be reused or adapted to fit your course, students, and teaching style.

We recommend the following strategies:

1. Syllabus Explanation as to Why We Use Practice Quizzes

Faculty have found it helpful to set the tone around the role of quizzes as low-stakes practice in the courseware and to distinguish them from higher-stakes exams.

- *Practice quizzes are designed to help you learn, not just earn points, that's why you are given multiple attempts. Their purpose is to show you what you understand well and what you may need help with before exams, projects, or future courses. Struggling with new material doesn't mean you're bad at this subject—it means you're learning. The goal of this course is progress, not perfection.*
- *The quizzes in this course are formative, which means they are for practice and feedback. A perfect score doesn't always mean deep understanding—and that's okay. What matters most is using these activities to identify where you're confident and where you need support.*

2. Reminder to Students About Ethical and Effective AI Use

Students often assume AI use is either fully allowed or fully forbidden. This language helps clarify expectations without accusation and focuses on the learning consequences of AI use, not just the course policy. Being explicit about what counts as appropriate versus inappropriate AI use helps set clear boundaries while keeping the emphasis on learning, skill development, and long-term success.

Artificial intelligence tools are becoming common in both school and work environments. I know many students choose to use AI as a learning support, similar to a tutor or study guide.

However, if AI is used only to produce answers without understanding them, it can create a false sense of mastery. That often makes later exams, future courses, and real-world tasks much harder.

It is very difficult to succeed in this class if AI is used to complete the stepping-stone work. Make sure you are doing the thinking that helps you grow.

Here are some examples of how I'd like you to think about appropriate and inappropriate AI use in this course:

- **Appropriate AI use:**
  - *Asking for explanations of concepts or methods*
  - *Requesting guidance on how to approach a problem*
  - *Seeking feedback on your reasoning or identifying errors in your thought process*
  - *Generating practice problems or study guides*
- **Inappropriate AI use:**
  - *Having AI craft complete solutions to submit as your work*
  - *Submitting AI-generated text as if it's your own*

3. Encouragement Before the First Quiz

Practice vs. Performance framing resonates especially well with students who feel pressure to "get everything right."

- *Think of quizzes like practice at the gym or rehearsal before a performance. Practice is where mistakes are useful. If you skip the thinking during practice, the performance becomes much harder, whether that's on exams, in future courses that build on this base material, or in class discussions. Practice repeatedly by improving, just like on your multiple quiz attempts.*
- *Important to Remember: This quiz is practice. Take your time, think through your answers, and notice which questions feel easy and which feel uncertain. That information matters more to me about your learning than your score.*

4. Why In-Class Checks Matter

Students may misinterpret in-class checks as punitive unless the purpose is clearly explained.

Sometimes we'll do short, in-class check-ins. These are not "gotcha" quizzes. They help both you and me see how well the ideas are sticking without outside tools.

These check-ins help both of us gain a clearer picture of what's working and what needs more attention, so you're better prepared for exams, future courses, and real-world situations where you'll need the knowledge and skills you are gaining in this class.

5. What to Do When Students Get 100% on Quizzes but Struggle Elsewhere

The goal is to help students recalibrate, seek help sooner, and redirect students toward learning behaviors that will actually support success.

- *Your quiz scores show that you can find correct answers, but I'm seeing some gaps when we talk through the ideas in class. That tells me the quizzes aren't giving us the full picture yet—and that's something we can work on together.*
- *This happens to a lot of students. Online quizzes don't always capture how well ideas stick when you have to explain them or use them in new situations.*
- *When you're working on quizzes, how confident do you feel explaining your answers without help? That's usually a better indicator than the score itself.*
- *My goal isn't to catch your mistakes, it's to help you build understanding that lasts. If the quizzes aren't doing that yet, we'll use other ways to check in.*
- *Going forward, I'd like you to pause after each quiz and write down two questions you still have or one concept you want to review. That will help us target what you need most.*
- *Later exams and future courses will expect you to explain and apply these ideas on your own. Let's make sure the practice now is setting you up for success in the future.*

6. Student Self-Reflection Prompt on AI Use

For some faculty, inviting reflection on AI use may feel counterintuitive at first. But encouraging students to reflect on how they use AI through open, non-punitive conversations supports metacognition and provides helpful insight into student learning, without requiring surveillance.

Did you use any tools (notes, study guides, AI, classmates) while reviewing for and completing this quiz?

If yes, what specifically helped you understand the material better—and what still feels unclear?

How would you give a future student advice on how to do well on this quiz?

The additional ideas below offer practical ways to assess student understanding beyond online quiz scores. These strategies support varied, learning-centered ways for students to demonstrate understanding and for faculty to identify where guidance, feedback, or adjustment is needed:

- **Provide students with clear explanations of learning goals**, including guidance on appropriate and responsible use of AI as a learning tool. This can happen in your syllabus, a short course announcement, or a discussion board prompt early in the term.
- **Create additional opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know** through varied assessments and active learning strategies (e.g. discussions, small-group work, hands-on activities, short writing tasks, or explaining their reasoning). This helps make thinking visible, allows for timely feedback and assistance, and better supports diverse learners and strengthens learning across contexts.
- **Leverage interactions with students to surface understanding**, provide feedback, and address common misconceptions. This is core instructional work—and more important than ever in an AI-rich environment.
- **Use brief in-class entry tickets or pop check-ins**, such as pulling one question from the previous module's quiz and asking students to answer it independently, followed by a short reflection on which concepts were most challenging. Reflection activities can encourage student awareness and accountability without adding grading or administrative burden.
- **Include at least one or two higher-stakes assessments during the term** (such as an exam, presentation, or applied project) that require students to integrate concepts and demonstrate understanding through critical thinking.

As we learn more about evidence-based teaching practices, and the research about AI evolves, we will continue to share resources that support you, including tools that help you use AI strategically to support teaching, reduce workload with Lumen Learning's courseware, and which help students use AI ethically and effectively in ways that strengthen their learning and professional growth.

Together, these resources are designed to reinforce the human role of teaching and support meaningful learning beyond assessment scores.