Using Generative AI for Curriculum Development

Workshop Quick Reference Handout

[Your Name] | [Date] | [Institution]

What Gen AI Can Do for Curriculum Work

- **Draft and revise** syllabi, learning objectives, rubrics, and assessment items
- **Restructure courses** around updated learning outcomes or accreditation standards
- **Generate scaffolding** for LMS modules, discussion prompts, and assignment sequences
- **Accelerate iteration** — work that took days can take hours with a well-crafted prompt

What It Can't Do (Your Expertise Still Matters)

- It doesn't know your students, your institution, or the nuances of your discipline
- Output can sound confident and polished while being wrong or shallow — always review
- It won't flag its own gaps; you provide the quality control

Think of it as a capable but uninformed teaching assistant. You provide the direction and expertise; it does the heavy lifting on drafting and structure.

The RACE Prompting Framework

RACE gives you a repeatable structure for writing prompts that produce useful output. The more specific you are in each element, the better the result.

	Element	What It Means	Example
R	**Role**	Who should the AI act as?	*"Act as a higher education curriculum designer with expertise in backward design."*
A	**Audience**	Who is the end user of the output?	*"The course serves first-year undergraduate students in a general education program."*
C	**Context**	What's the situation, course level, constraints?	*"This is a 16-week intro biology course at a mid-size public university. Current objectives are vague."*
E	**Expectation**	What exactly do you want back? Format, length, standards?	*"Rewrite 5 measurable learning objectives using Bloom's taxonomy verbs. Numbered list. One sentence each."*

RACE Example — Assembled Prompt

Complete prompt built from the RACE elements above:

Act as a higher education curriculum designer with expertise in backward design. The course serves first-year undergraduate students in a general education program. This is a 16-week intro biology course at a mid-size public university. The current learning objectives are vague and not aligned to assessments. Rewrite 5 measurable learning objectives using Bloom's taxonomy action verbs. Format as a numbered list. Each objective should be one sentence.

Prompting Tips

- **Use the AI to build your prompt.** Describe your task in plain language and ask it to help you structure a detailed prompt using RACE.
- **Iterate.** Your first prompt rarely produces the best output. Review the result, refine the prompt, and re-submit.
- **Start small.** One learning objective or one syllabus section — not an entire course redesign in one prompt.
- **Be specific in Expectation.** Tell it the format, length, tone, and standards you want. Vague expectations produce vague output.
- **Save your best prompts.** Once you get a prompt working well, save it as a template you can reuse and adapt.

A Note on Instructor Disclosure

Even without a formal institutional policy, consider disclosing when AI tools have been used in developing your course materials. Transparency builds trust with students and colleagues, and models the behavior we want from students.

Sample Disclosure Statement:

"Portions of this syllabus were drafted with AI assistance and reviewed and edited by the instructor."

Getting Started After Today

Tool	Free Access	URL
Claude	Free tier available	claude.ai
ChatGPT	Free tier available	chat.openai.com
Gemini	Free with Google account	gemini.google.com
Copilot	Free with Microsoft account	copilot.microsoft.com

Your first step: Pick one thing from one course and try it this week.

Resources

- **Anthropic Prompt Engineering Guide:** https://docs.anthropic.com/en/docs/build-with-claude/prompt-engineering

- **OpenAI Prompt Best Practices:** https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/prompt-engineering
- **EDUCAUSE AI in Higher Ed Resources:** https://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications
- **Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs:** https://tips.uark.edu/blooms-taxonomy-verb-chart

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Questions or follow-up? Contact: [Your Name] | [Email] | [Office/Phone]