DCE Faculty AI Tinkering - IDW25'

Building Your Own: AI Learning Companion

1 Let's Imagine —What's That Learning Experience?

2 Craft Its Personality/Role

3 System Prompting— Wiring Its Brain

4 Take It for a Spin

5 Infuse It With Knowledge

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1

Let's Imagine —What's That Learning Experience?

Ah, there you are! I've been waiting for someone with your level of expertise and passion for learning design. Let's dream a little, shall we?

Picture This: Your course has a digital companion—a trusted partner that enhances your students' learning journey, fills gaps in understanding, and keeps them inspired long after class ends.
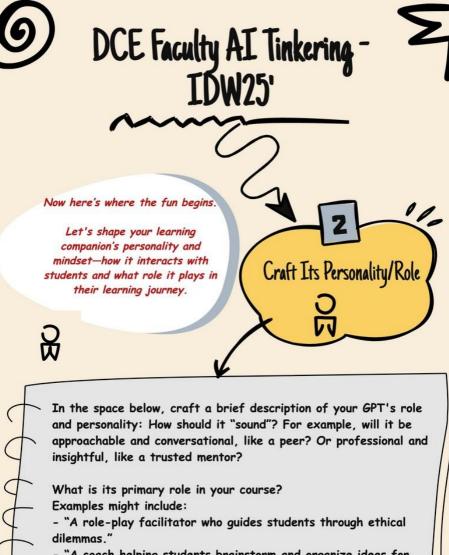
In the space below, sketch out your ideas:
- What specific challenges do your students face that you've always wanted to address?
- What role would this learning companion play? A tutor? A coach? A creative partner?
- Imagine overhearing your students talking about it. What are they saying?

Tip: Don't worry about making it "realistic" just yet. We'll bring it to life together.

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Now here's where the fun begins.

Let's shape your learning companion's personality and mindset—how it interacts with students and what role it plays in their learning journey.

2

Craft Its Personality/Role

In the space below, craft a brief description of your GPT's role and personality: How should it "sound"? For example, will it be approachable and conversational, like a peer? Or professional and insightful, like a trusted mentor?

What is its primary role in your course?
Examples might include:
- "A role-play facilitator who guides students through ethical dilemmas."
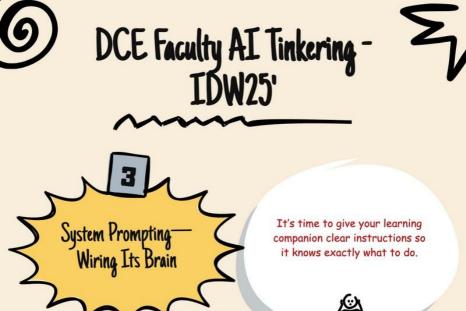- "A coach helping students brainstorm and organize ideas for projects."
- "A tutor who explains complex concepts with relatable analogies."

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3

System Prompting— Wiring Its Brain

It's time to give your learning companion clear instructions so it knows exactly what to do.

You've already outlined its role and style in Step 2—build on that here:

- Task: Define its purpose (e.g., "Help students connect theories to real-world examples").
- Detailed instructions/ Steps: Outline key actions (e.g., "Introduce concepts, ask reflective questions, suggest next steps").
- Boundaries: Set limits (e.g., "Stick to course materials; encourage external research for advanced topics").

Pro tip: Combine clarity with flexibility to give your AI clear direction while allowing room for creativity.

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4

Take It for a Spin

Time for the first test flight! Enter the breakout room. Pretend you're a student, and try out each other's prompts to start your conversations with the AI learning companion.

You can follow the guidance of the GPT, or ask some questions to get it started:
"Can you explain [a tricky concept from your course] in plain English?"
"What's a good resource to dive deeper into [a specific topic]?"

Observe how it responds:
Does it "get" your students' needs?
Is it aligning with the tone and personality you envisioned?
Where does it shine? Where does it fall short?

5

Infuse It With Knowledge

This companion is only as good as the knowledge it has access to. So let's make sure it's well-prepared.

What resources should it know inside and out?
Your course syllabus? Key readings? Case studies?
Supplementary materials like video transcripts, research papers, or lecture materials from your course?