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Blended Teaching, Learning and Assessment (BTLA) Guide

General guidelines for academic staff navigating the foundational aspects of blended teaching, learning, and assessment (BTLA)

Contents

About the Guide

The Guide is designed to support academic staff at Stellenbosch University (SU) in navigating the foundational aspects of blended teaching, learning and assessment (BTLA). Developed by the Centre for Learning Technologies (CLT) in collaboration with colleagues across the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE), it offers practical guidance that is aligned with SU's learning-centred philosophy of curriculum design and facilitation.

Anchored in institutional policy and grounded in evidence-informed practice, the Guide serves as a structured entry point for lecturers — especially those new to blended, hybrid or online modes of provision. The Guide aims to provide clear, accessible strategies for designing context-specific and academically responsive blended courses supported by the SUNLearn-instances, while creating inclusive and well-sequenced learning experiences and thoughtful digital assessment approaches.

Acknowledgements

Compiled by: Yakhuluntu Dubazana, Advisor: Digital Learning, Centre for Learning Technologies (ydubazana@sun.ac.za)
With contributions from: Dr. Sonja Strydom, Dr. Jan Petrus Bosman, Magriet de Villiers, Grazelde Langeveldt
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Section A: Foundations of digital pedagogy

1. Introduction

BTLA at Stellenbosch University is guided by a learning-centred philosophy that places the student as active participant in knowledge creation. Section A of the Guide establishes a shared conceptual foundation for digital pedagogy at SU, grounded in institutional values, educational research and policy commitments. The focus is on creating teaching and learning environments that are inclusive, values-driven and intellectually rigorous – particularly in contexts where digital platforms are central to learning engagement.

2. Conceptualising teaching-learning-assessment (TLA) as an integrated approach

At SU, teaching, learning and assessment are understood as interconnected practices that collectively enable a transformative student experience.

- **Teaching** involves designing environments and activities that facilitate knowledge-building.
- **Learning** is regarded as a relational, situated and reflective process that builds on students' prior knowledge and social contexts.
- **Assessment** is not merely evaluative but integral to learning because it offers opportunities for students to receive feedback, demonstrate understanding and develop disciplinary fluency.

3. Synchronous and asynchronous teaching at SU

Blended teaching blends when we learn (time), where we meet (place) and how we teach (pedagogy). In practice you'll blend the two modes:

- synchronous (real-time/'screen-to-face') for moments that need immediacy, dialogue and quick clarification (e.g. live tutorials, Q&A, oral checks);
- asynchronous (not at the same time) for flexible, reusable content (e.g. short lecture inputs, readings, low-stakes checks) that students can engage with at their own pace.

A high-quality blend is delivered when onsite/online and synchronous/asynchronous activities are blended intentionally so that neither feels like busywork and each serves a clear outcome.

4. Understanding blended learning at SU

Before we engage deeply with the idea of digital pedagogy, let us pause and clarify what 'blended learning' means in our context. We recognise that blended learning is a complex

and evolving practice, not to be captured in a single neat definition. Still, it is useful to hold on to a shared understanding that guides our work.
One explanation that we at CLT find particularly valuable comes from Krause (2007), as cited in Bath and Bourke (2010):

> Blended learning is realised in teaching and learning environments where there is an effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning as a result of adopting a strategic and systematic approach to the use of technology combined with the best features of face-to-face interaction.

We prefer this definition because it reminds us of several important principles:

1. Blended learning is focused on teaching and learning, not on tools.
2. It acknowledges the importance of integrating pedagogies, ways of learning and modes of delivery.
3. It is not an afterthought or add-on, but requires systematic planning: Where will digital practices be most effective?
4. It values face-to-face interaction, while recognising the possibilities of technology-enhanced learning when used appropriately.

At SU, blended learning is defined according to this understanding – as the intentional combination of face-to-face and digital learning experiences across a continuum of modes of provision. The emphasis is on design choices that prioritise pedagogy before platform. In this way, blended learning enables inclusive, flexible and collaborative learning that aligns with the University's commitment to transformation, co-creation and student success.

The SU Teaching and Learning Policy notes that all credit-bearing courses should be "digitally enabled and presented on a continuum from blended in-person to hybrid modes of provision". In practice, this means structuring activities around the rhythm of learning: what happens before contact time, what takes place during class and what comes afterwards. Each of these moments can include digital or physical engagements, depending on the best support for the outcomes.

Digital elements in blended learning should be designed to promote active learner engagement, particularly through activities that are clear in their expectations, aligned with outcomes and accessible across linguistic and cultural contexts. Examples include guided readings with analytical prompts, low-bandwidth audio commentary, captioned videos and reflective discussion boards. These foundational elements support learning readiness and bridge the gap between content access and conceptual understanding.

This approach is echoed in the **DeLTA framework** (designing for learning, teaching and assessment), a conceptual model that helps lecturers plan for aligned, integrated learning experiences. The framework encourages the design of activities and assessments according to relational, reflexive and transformative principles that resonate strongly with blended learning. By drawing on DeLTA's framing of TLA as holistic and iterative practice,

lecturers are supported in designing activities that foster critical engagement, conceptual clarity and disciplinary depth. The CTL website depicts the DeLTA framework as a reflective cycle with five interlinked phases: curriculum context, outcomes, assessment, design for learning, and reflection. Often initiated through a situational analysis of the curriculum context, the framework does embed a constructive alignment loop, too (Biggs, 1996; Laurillard, 2012), between outcomes, assessment and design for learning. These phases draw on various theoretical models; for example, Laurillard's conversational framework (1999) can guide the blended and online design decisions within the design-for-learning phase. This cyclical model supports an ongoing process of pedagogical renewal, rather than a one-off design act.

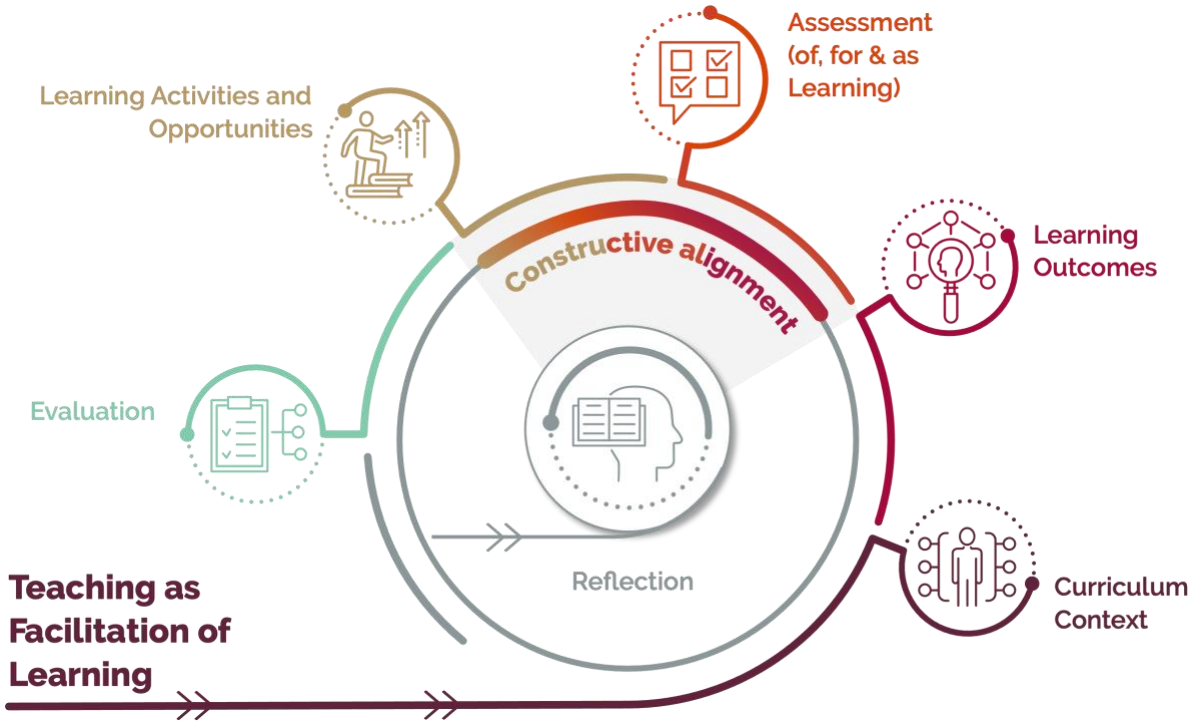


Figure 1: DeLTA framework

5. Defining digital pedagogy in the SU context

Digital pedagogy, an emerging field in educational sciences, focuses on the integration of digital technologies into TLA approaches. Closely aligned with traditional pedagogy, digital pedagogy focuses pertinently on the development of alternative strategies and approaches that utilise digital technologies optimally to enrich the curriculum and address contemporary educational challenges (Jurčević and Horvat, 2023) while focusing on learning. Digital pedagogy speaks to three dimensions: a pedagogical orientation that is often associated with socio-constructivism; pedagogical practices where collaboration and social knowledge construction are emphasised; and digital pedagogical competencies for teachers (Väätäjä & Ruokamo, 2021).

In digitally mediated environments, this pedagogy often begins with structured activities that involve reading, listening or viewing course materials. When these are designed with clarity and purpose, they provide essential scaffolding for deeper inquiry, collaboration or production. Such foundational activities should include reflection prompts, clear learning outcomes and contextually relevant examples; and ensuring they not be passive but actively support knowledge-building.

To further our knowledge of digital pedagogy, we can draw on three knowledge domains as outlined by the TPACK model (see point 6) and explore how we can increase student engagement in the digital environment (see point 7).

6. Framing technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)

A foundational aspect of understanding digital knowledge domains is the consideration that disciplinary content, pedagogy and technology be integrated sensibly and seamlessly with course design and facilitation. The **TPACK framework** (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) provides a useful lens for understanding this integration. TPACK recognises that effective blended teaching requires more than technical skill; it involves dynamic interplay between the following domains:

- **content knowledge (CK) –** a deep understanding of the subject matter;
- **pedagogical knowledge (PK) –** strategies for how students learn and how to facilitate learning; and
- **technological knowledge (TK) –** competency in using educational technologies to support learning.

When these knowledge domains overlap, you are equipped to design experiences only insofar as that integration is intentionally oriented to students' needs and the local context (access, language, disability, prior knowledge). In other words, TPACK supplies a map; responsiveness comes from deliberate context analysis and feedback.

The TPACK framework encourages lecturers to do the following:

- Select digital tools that complement subject matter and support learning (TK-CK).
- Scaffold digital activities that speak to students' lived realities and varying technological access (PK–CK).
- Reflect critically on how technological affordances may shift teaching practices and content delivery (TK-PK).

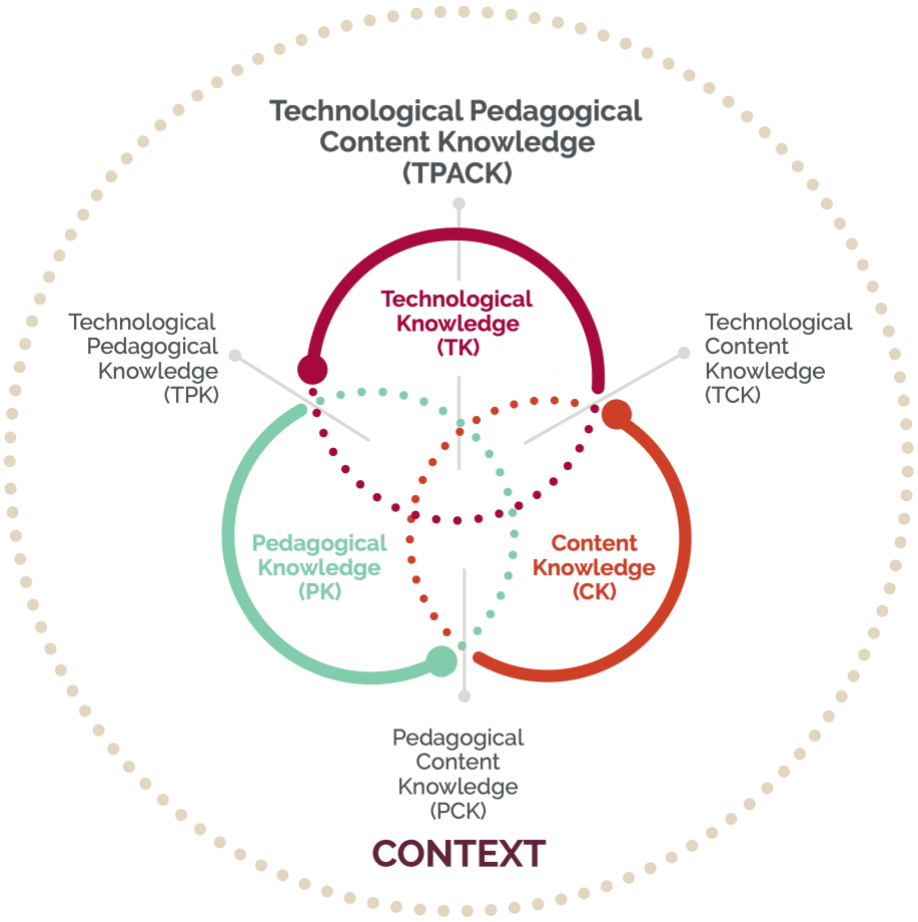


Figure 2: TPACK framework

Source: Introductory themes of blended teaching, learning and assessment

7. Integrating Laurillard's framework with student engagement across contexts

Diana Laurillard's conversational framework provides a foundational model for understanding how effective learning occurs as an iterative, dialogic process. It emphasises multiple overlapping dialogues in learning – between teacher and learner, among learners, and the learner's internal dialogue – all facilitated through cycles of action and feedback. In Laurillard's view, knowledge isn't merely transmitted from expert to student; rather, learners construct understanding through conversation, practice and reflection. This theory underpins six learning approaches, outlined in the table below. Academic staff can use this framework to evaluate whether their module design favours only a narrow range of learning approaches.

Table 1: Laurillard's six learning approaches with digitally enabled examples

Learning approach	Digital engagement examples at SU
Read-watch-listen (formerly 'acquisition')	Students engage with threshold-concept media through narrated PowerPoint videos, short lecturer-recorded explainers, curated podcasts and AI-generated visual aids shared via SUNLearn. Accessibility features – such as transcripts, captions and alternative text – are included where possible.
Inquiry	Students use digital tools to interrogate sources (e.g. ChatPDF), conduct guided research via SU Library resources, explore datasets or prepare for lessons using multilingual prompting. Inquiry activities often combine online searching, annotation tools and structured questioning prompts.
Discussion	Interaction occurs through SUNLearn forums, Teams breakout rooms or structured argument prompts. Students respond to peers, compare their reasoning with AI-generated alternatives or collaborate on shared documents where dialogic exchanges build understanding.
Practice	Students complete tasks generated by/based on applications such as quiz banks with iterative feedback, digital simulations, scaffolded worked examples or auto-generated variations of problems. Learning management system (LMS) tools support repeated cycles of feedback, correction and refinement.
Collaboration	Groups work together using shared Google/Microsoft documents, Teams channels, collaborative whiteboards or AI-supported project planning. Students co-construct resources such as short e-books, concept maps, design briefs or discipline-specific artefacts.
Production	Students produce outputs using multimodal tools: Microsoft Designer for visuals, narrated videos, AI-augmented writing drafts or chatbot-assisted content prototypes. Final artefacts demonstrate applied mastery, not AI-generated output alone.

Student engagement in digital and blended learning environments is not automatic; it must be intentionally designed into the learning process. In higher education, 'student engagement' is defined as the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that students bring to their learning, which includes their motivation to make progress in a course (EdGlossary, n.d.). Designing for student engagement requires the following:

- Make the purpose of each activity explicit: What should students focus on? Why does it matter?
- Structure activities to allow for reflection and feedback – both from peers and from your as lecturer.
- Consider access: Are the tools mobile-friendly? Are they language-accessible? Can students complete the task with limited connectivity?

Section B: SUNLearn-enabled course and content design

Effective course and learning design does not involve merely uploading content; it requires that student learning pathways be structured intentionally to enable meaningful navigation, purposeful engagement and confidence-building in blended, online and hybrid contexts. This section supports you in applying these overarching principles through exploring SUNLearn tools and your application, design templates and existing resources to achieve pedagogically sound course design.

1. Getting started with SUNLearn: 'How-to' structure, flow and function

This section offers technical guidance for designing effective and accessible modules using SUNLearn[1], SU's official LMS. The focus is on the practical dimensions of digital course design, including layout, navigation and key SUNLearn features. These guidelines are closely aligned with the support available through the Learning Technologies Resource Hub and are complemented by several short-format guides on the Lecturer Support for Teaching Online site on SUNLearn. Together, they provide step-by-step instructions to help academic staff structure their course environments clearly, promote intuitive navigation and support student autonomy and progression. This technical foundation is intended to work in tandem with the pedagogical guidance offered in subsequent sections of the Guide.

For hands-on, guided practice, we encourage you to enrol for the interactive course **SUNLearn Staff Self-paced Training**, which walks you through setting up your course, adding content, engaging students, managing assessments and monitoring activity. This

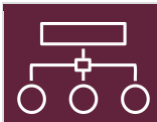
[1] 'SUNLearn' is an umbrella term that indicates all SUNLearn instances (e.g. EMSLearn, FMHSLearn, SocSciLearn and STEMLearn).

resource is available at any time, allowing you to learn at your own pace while exploring the same tools and workflows that you will use in your teaching.

Quick start: essential SUNLearn setup guides

If you are brand-new to SUNLearn, the table below highlights just a few core actions to help you get your module up and running. These are the tasks most needed in the first week of teaching. While this table is not exhaustive, it provides a strong starting point for setting up your module on the LMS.

Table 2: SUNLearn setup guides

 **Structure your SUNLearn page**	 **Communicating with students**	 **Creating resources**	 **Uploading resources**
• Change topic headings. • Create a label. • Edit text on SUNLearn.	• Post an announcement. • Use a discussion forum. • Facilitate online discussions.	• Create a page. • Create a book.	• Share files. • Share folders. • Share a link to a website. • Create 'data light' resources.

2. Learning design principles

This section helps you plan and create well-designed, learning-centred modules on SUNLearn (or your faculty-specific SUNLearn instance). Each resource draws on proven learning design principles and reflects on the educational research that underpins them, to help ensure that your modules be clear, engaging and supportive of student learning.

Definition of 'learning design'

> Learning design refers to the intentional and theory-informed structuring of learning experiences. It involves deliberate decisions about what, when, where and how to teach, including choices about content, sequencing, timing, pedagogical strategies, learning activities and assessment. At its core, learning design is concerned with creating conditions that support meaningful engagement and knowledge building, rather than focusing on digital tools themselves. In contemporary higher education, learning design must also attend to learner diversity, the multimodal contexts in which learning takes place and the navigation demands of digital environments. This requires integrating pedagogical principles with considerations of usability, cognitive load and accessibility, and ensuring that design decisions remain aligned with the

> purpose of the course and the needs of its stakeholders (Müller, 2025; Stripe & Simpson-Bergel, 2023; Smart Sparrow, n.d.).

A key foundation here is universal design for learning (UDL), an internationally recognised framework that helps lecturers design for inclusivity from the outset rather than retrofit accessibility. UDL is grounded in cognitive neuroscience and emphasises providing multiple means of engagement, representation and action/expression to support the full diversity of students (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014; CAST, 2018). In practice, this means thinking intentionally about how students connect with content, how information is presented and the varied ways in which students can demonstrate what they've learned. For a detailed operationalisation of UDL checkpoints and digital examples, see the table **Operationalising UDL principles** to help you design more accessible and inclusive online modules.
We recommend starting with the suggested **SUNLearn module template** (or the module template of your faculty-specific Learn instance). The template helps you organise course content clearly and consistently across modules but leaves you flexibility to personalise your material and teaching style. For assistance with accessing the template, please contact your faculty's blended learning coordinator (BLC) or learn@sun.ac.za and request to import the module template.

In addition to the module template, a curated set of resources is available to support the full learning design process – from initial course planning to final quality checks. The table below provides practical tools, templates and guides to help you structure, design and refine your SUNLearn modules in accordance with sound pedagogical and accessibility principles.

Table 3: Practical resources for module design and development

Resources are organised into two categories – one to help you **begin designing**, the other to **progressively enhance** your modules. "Getting started" introduces foundational tools for planning and structuring a SUNLearn module. Then "Extension activities" includes more advanced guides to refine, evaluate and sustain the quality of online and blended learning design.

Getting started

Topic	Description	Links
SUNLearn module template	A recommended course template to help you organise content clearly and consistently across modules, but leaving you the flexibility to personalise content	• SUNLearn Template infographic • How to use the SUNLearn Template

Learning design planning templates	A simple tool to map out learning outcomes, activities, technologies and assessments – ensuring that your online module align with your in-person teaching	• Basic Learning Design Planning (LDP) template (Blueprint) • Storyboard template
Design principles and guidelines	Guidelines for planning, structuring and presenting online content using evidence-informed approaches to help you make the most of your SUNLearn or faculty-specific Learn instance and create better learning experiences for your students	• Signalling for important information • Module structure and organisation • Clear and explicit instructional text • Headings • 'Evergreen' module design • How to design and format callout blocks • Design consistency **Further reading** • Cognitive Load Theory: A teacher's guide

Extension activities

Topic	Description	Links
Digital accessibility	SUNLearn content creators must adhere to the minimum standards of digital accessibility, i.e. designing pages, activities and resources that are usable for everyone, including students using assistive technologies such as screen readers. Review your content regularly and use SUNLearn's built-in TinyMCE accessibility checker to scan for issues.	• CLT Guide: Digital Accessibility Toolkit **Further reading** • Designing Accessible Learning Content • Tools and guidelines for accessible digital content creation (WCAG guidelines) **Additional accessibility checkers** • Microsoft Word Accessibility Assistant • Accessibility Features in Google • Adobe PDF Accessibility Checker
Visuals and interactive	SUNLearn supports multimedia and visual design. Use	• Using multimedia webinar • Blend it like a Superhero OER

elements for engagement	interactive graphics, videos and accordions. Follow SU's guide 'Blend it like a Superhero' to embed and format visuals for clarity and accessibility.	○ Collapsible sections (Foldaway Forging Power) ○ Interactive images (Intralinking Power) ○ Embedding multimedia (Interweaving Power) **Further reading** • Using Graphics in Education – Infographic • Multimedia Design for Learning: An Overview of Reviews With Meta-Meta-Analysis
Module design quality checks	A simple QA checklist that helps you review your module design, content and assessments to ensure that they meet key quality standards. Use it as a final check before publishing your module on SUNLearn or your faculty-specific Learn instance.	• Quality assurance for online teaching • QA Checklist **Further reading** • Considerations for Quality Online Course Design
Module rollover	A practical guide/checklist for faculty to refresh their existing SUNLearn courses after rollover and prepare for the next academic year.	• Module Rollover Checklist

3. Creating effective content with PowerPoint

PowerPoint remains one of the most widely used tools for developing learning content at SU. Beyond presentations, it can serve as a powerful medium for creating short learning videos, concept explainers and revision materials, enabling staff to deliver asynchronous learning materials that complement synchronous or asynchronous lectures. When designed with student engagement and accessibility in mind, these videos extend learning beyond the classroom and support students' diverse study habits.

To support you in this process, CLT provides a range of resources to help you save your presentations as videos, improve your PowerPoint skills and apply the official SU design

theme to maintain a consistent and professional look across your course materials. For a more comprehensive overview, you can enrol for the PowerPoint Self-Help Training Course.

4. Additional digital platforms at SU

4.1. Extended learning spaces

Venues that function as extended learning spaces (ELS) allow you to stream and record lectures in equipped rooms across campus. Use ELS to improve content accessibility, reinforce learning, widen access and let students revisit complex content without replacing live, interactive teaching. Lecture venues equipped with ELS technology allow for ideal recording and livestreaming of in-person sessions. We encourage you to explore the ELS Information Hub, which offers venue-specific guidelines, FAQs and technical support details. The Hub outlines how to plan recordings, adjust in-class settings, troubleshoot common issues, and more.

When to use ELS

- You want to livestream lectures so that students who are not physically present can participate in real time and you want to provide recordings that students can revisit for consolidation and revision.
- Your teaching activity benefits from in-room technology (document camera, multiple microphones) and a controlled capture setup.

Good practice

- After your session, request the ELS recording by logging a ticket with IT via LearnHelp, indicating the venue, date and time of the lecture. Once IT shares the file with you (or uploads it for you), post the recording link and slides on SUNLearn with clear timing and expectations.
- Add accurate captions before releasing recordings[2]. Auto-captions are a draft—review and correct for accessibility and disciplinary terms.

4.2. Telematics Services

Telematics Services provides an interactive broadcast and media-production environment that you can use to create high-quality teaching materials, to livestream events or to record specialised learning resources. The services integrate studio-level filming, streaming and audio-visual production support. Book studio or mobile-unit sessions well in advance and schedule a pre-production meeting to plan equipment, lighting, audio and location needs. All services can be booked via the Telematic Facilities Booking System.

[2] ELS sessions are auto-recorded (KOLA), but beyond this, sharing and storage are handled at faculty/module level.

Use Telematics Services for the following purposes:

- Produce professionally recorded learning materials (e.g., lightboard explanations, green-screen videos, panel discussions, interviews).
- Livestream a teaching or public-engagement event using high-quality cameras, microphones and technical assistance.
- Create podcasts or screen-based recordings in a soundproof environment with support for setup and editing.
- Record teaching content off-site using the mobile camera unit.

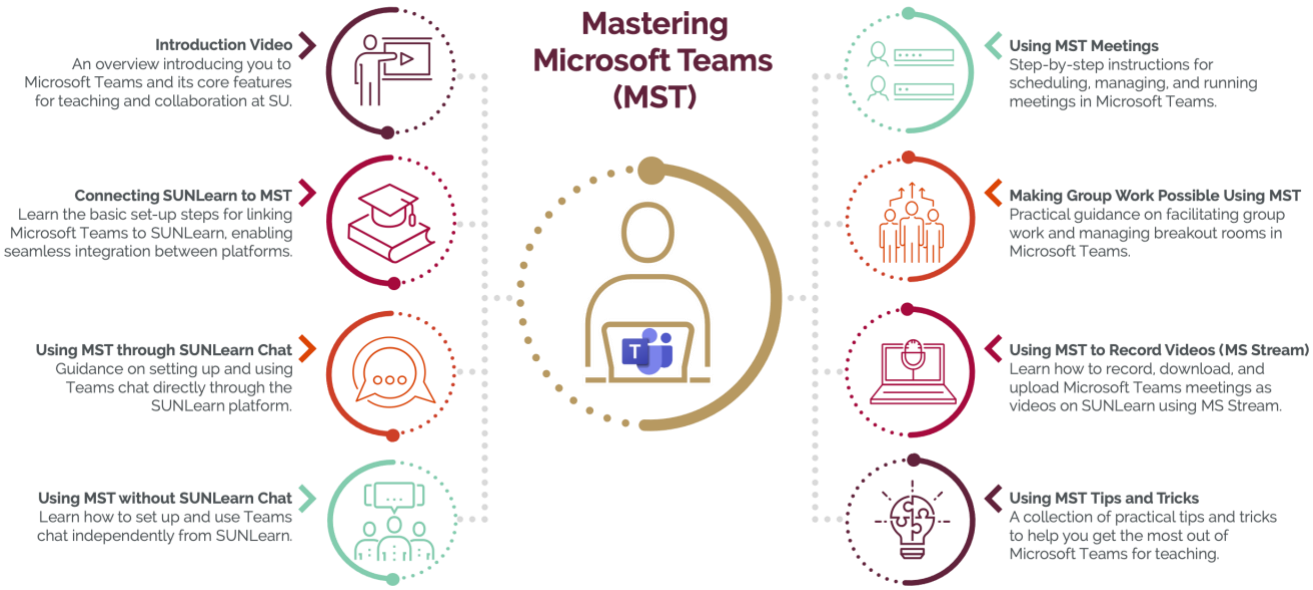
4.3. Microsoft Teams

MS Teams supports live online classes, group work and recordings and is useful for quick oral checks of understanding. MS Teams is suitable when you:

- prefer short, interactive live online conversations over long lectures;
- want to facilitate collaboration through breakout rooms, allowing students to work in small groups and report back in plenary discussions; and
- use real-time tools such as polls, chat and whiteboards to prompt engagement and reflection during synchronous sessions.

You can request that your SUNLearn modules be connected to an MS Teams space by emailing learn@sun.ac.za or logging a ticket at https://learnhelp.sun.ac.za. While Teams is often used for synchronous teaching (live classes, group work, recordings), its integration in blended courses is guided by faculty practice and your preferences.

Find what you need by clicking the headings in the diagram below to open the relevant MST guides and how-to's.



Section C: Digitally enabled assessments

Digitally enabled assessment is not simply transferring traditional tasks to an online environment; it requires thoughtful design that is inclusive, pedagogically intentional and resilient to integrity challenges. This section provides a practical foundation for rethinking assessment using the LMS, Turnitin and MS Teams and with the acknowledgement of AI. Well-designed assessment fosters critical thinking, academic voice and student self-reflection.

The diagram below highlights six key considerations that form the backbone of digitally enabled assessments: constructive alignment; modes of provision and logistics; match purpose, type and tools; assessment literacies; feedback and grading; and AI in assessment design.

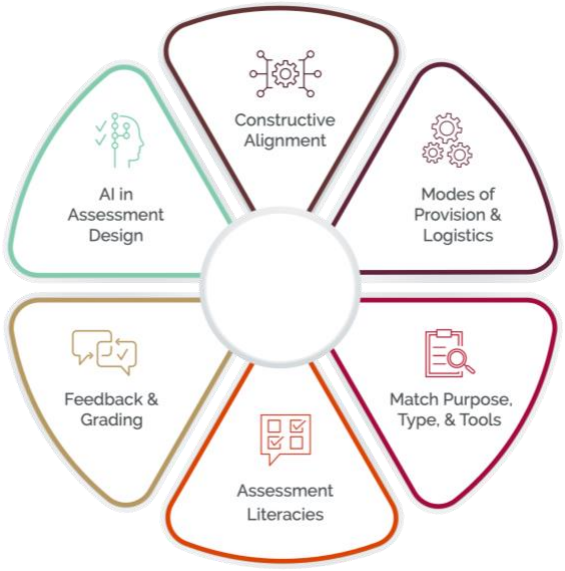


Figure 3: Six key considerations for designing digitally enabled assessments

1. Constructive alignment in assessment design

Constructive alignment is a central principle in assessment design, ensuring coherence among intended learning outcomes, teaching activities assessment tasks and graduate attributes. It means that your intended learning outcomes (ILOs), teaching-learning activities and assessments are designed deliberately to point in the same direction so that what students are asked to do is the best evidence of what you want them to learn (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Biggs, 1996). When alignment is tight, assessment becomes a lever for the right kind of learning rather than a disconnected hurdle (Price et al., 2012).

Designing for alignment requires clarity about learning outcomes, careful selection of assessment methods and integration of teaching-learning activities that prepare students to

succeed in those assessments. Outcomes should articulate not only the knowledge to be acquired but also the level of performance expected, making use of taxonomies such as Bloom's or SOLO (Biggs & Collis, 1982). Assessments must then be chosen because they provide valid evidence of those outcomes being achieved, with explicit criteria and standards that communicate what 'quality' looks like (Price et al., 2012). Equally important is variety and inclusivity: using a balanced portfolio of assessment methods to capture diverse skills and ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning (McArthur, 2021).

1.1. Designing with alignment: step-by-step

Useful methods/tools to support assessment mapping

- **ABC Learning Design** cards to plan activity sequences that align to ILOs (UCL Digital Education): Part 1. Introducing ABC Learning Design; ABC Learning Design Toolkit Resources

1.2. Communicating assessment plans clearly

Clear and early communication of your assessment plan is important, inter alia to reduce student anxiety, promote fairness and build trust. Share a structured overview of assessments at the very start of the course or module, ideally in the **SUNLearn instance or module framework**, so that students know exactly what is expected of them and when. This includes not only a list of tasks but also the purpose, weighting, deadlines and feedback arrangements for each task.

Key recommendations for communicating assessment plans

- Publish a **one-page assessment plan** at the start of the term/module on SUNLearn.
- Explicitly state which tasks are **formative** (for practice and feedback) and which are **summative** (for grading).
- Indicate whether tasks are **compulsory or optional** and explain how formative tasks support access to summative ones (e.g., completing practice quizzes before a final test).
- Specify the **mode of provision** (e.g. in-class, online via SUNLearn, take-home).
- Clarify **feedback channels** (peer, automated quiz, lecturer comments) and timelines for receiving feedback.
- Note any **special conditions** (e.g. number of attempts allowed, access windows, accommodations for load shedding).
- Provide **explicit guidance on AI use**: whether AI tools are prohibited, permitted or required for a given task. Clarify expectations around declarations, process evidence (drafts, logs, oral verification) and ethical use.
- Link the plan directly to **learning outcomes** to make the constructive alignment visible.

2. Modes of provision and logistics

The design of digital assessments must consider the mode of provision (online, hybrid, in-person digital) and the logistics of delivery (e.g. SUNLearn setup, secure computer user areas [CUAs], Safe Exam Browser [SEB] profiles, bandwidth realities and communication pathways for students). High-stakes assessments – whether centrally timetabled or

departmentally managed – require clear planning, communication and appropriate infrastructure.

- **Centrally timetabled assessments (A2/A3)** are managed via SUNStudent and typically are taken during the formal exam period.
- **Departmentally managed assessments** such as class tests and flexible summative tasks also must be uploaded to SUNLearn. Inform your students of the format, timing and logistics well in advance via announcements and Calendar entries.

For invigilated or secure assessments conducted on campus, SU provides CUAs that support the following:

- locked-down exam profiles – prevent access to files, internet and external tools;
- restricted Wi-Fi access – limits connectivity to permitted resources only; and
- SEB – enables secure proctoring in digital assessments.
    - For step-by-step setup and troubleshooting, see the Safe Exam Browser How-to Guide.

Always log high-stakes assessments in the SUNLearn assessment calendar and notify the LTS team (email to learn@sun.ac.za or log a ticket via https://learnhelp.sun.ac.za) in advance to schedule technical checks or dry runs.

3. Match purpose, type and tools

Choose assessment formats that align purpose (formative vs summative), type (quiz, portfolio, oral, peer review) and tools (SUNLearn quizzes, Teams orals, Turnitin rubrics) to the intended outcome. Explicitly signal to students where AI adds value and where human judgment must remain central.

Table 4: Tools and technical setup for digitally enabled assessments (source: Online Teaching Guide: Consider alternatives to common assessment methods | SUNLearn)

Assessment purpose	Recommended SUNLearn tools	Key affordances & best practices	Recommended user guides
Written Assignments & Projects	Moodle Assignment	• Individual or group submissions. • Inline, audio, or rubric feedback. • Integrates with Turnitin for similarity checking. • Supports draft-to-final workflows.	• Assignment • Turnitin Assignment 2 Guide
Portfolios & Reflective journals / multi-part projects	MyPortfolio (Mahara)	• Ideal for portfolios, journals, and multi-part projects. • Students can reflect on their learning journey. • Pages can be submitted for assessment via Moodle.	• Portfolios
Quizzes & Exams	Moodle Quiz	• Auto-graded questions (MCQ, T/F, etc.). • Timed attempts, randomize questions. • Use for low-stakes practice and concept checks.	• Quiz
Presentation/oral	Moodle Assignment (Video Upload)	• Students upload recorded oral work • Supports audio/video formats • Enables rubric-based marking	• Assignment
Peer Assessment & Collaboration	Moodle Workshop	• Facilitates structured peer review of assignments, with teacher moderation; can be anonymous, • Students can assess each other's work based on rubric.	• Workshop • Wiki

		• Excellent for developing critical evaluation skills. • Forum/Wiki supports collaborative discussion or group writing, enabling assessment of participation, critical analysis, and collaborative skills.	
Low-stakes formative checks and engagement tasks	Moodle Quiz, Choice module, Survey / Feedback tools, H5P Interactive Content	• Enables quick concept checks, self-assessment, peer discussion or reflection activities. • Supports continuous engagement and formative assessment with minimal overhead. • Interactive videos, drag-and-drops, hotspots, branching scenarios • Auto-graded micro-tasks and engagement activities • Suitable for continuous low-stakes checks	• H5P • Quiz
Written discussions	Forums	• Host graded discussions, debates, and Q&A sessions. • Students can sign up for discussion groups. • Promotes peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.	• Forum • Chat

4. Assessment literacies

Assessment literacy refers to the capacity of both staff and students to understand the purposes of assessment, the standards for academic success, the criteria that define quality and the processes of judging quality (Smith, 2024). In essence, an assessment-literate student knows what a given assignment is asking for and what 'good' work looks like in that context and can evaluate their own output against those standards. Research indicates that students' grasp of the assessment goals and criteria of their assessments strongly predicts their academic success (Price et al., 2012; Zhu & Evans, 2024). Conversely, unclear expectations or hidden criteria create a serious barrier to learning.

By building assessment literacy, we empower students to navigate assessments more confidently and equitably. It also helps them become self-regulated learners who can judge their own work, recognise its strengths and weaknesses, and improve upon it. In other words, students with strong assessment literacy are better able to interpret feedback and take responsibility for their learning – a key outcome for higher education. The table below outlines specific actions for lecturers and students, respectively, to build assessment literacy defined according to the intended outcomes for students.

Table 5: Practical strategies for building assessment literacy (adapted from: University of Queensland, 2021). Further reading: Assessment literacy: for students and staff (tip sheet; University of Queensland, 2021).

Focus	Staff responsibilities	Student responsibilities	Intended outcomes
Clarify standards.	Publish plain-language criteria/rubrics early; align with learning outcomes; explain weightings and purpose.	Review, annotate and paraphrase criteria; ask clarifying questions.	Reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Understand expectations. Connect tasks to learning outcomes.
Make quality visible.	Provide exemplars of past work (high/medium/low quality); unpack terms (e.g. 'critical analysis'); discuss why work succeeds or fails.	Compare exemplars with criteria; identify differences; extract hallmarks of quality.	Recognise features of quality. Differentiate standards. Build evaluative judgment.
Practise judgment.	Use activities where students apply rubrics to	Engage in self- and peer marking;	Internalise criteria,

	sample work; model expert marking.	compare with expert judgements.	Practise evaluative judgement. Strengthen self-assessment.
Feedback and feedforward	Provide actionable feedback (written, audio, screencast); show how to apply it in future tasks.	Interpret and apply feedback; set improvement targets; monitor progress.	Act on feedback. Improve performance. Develop self-regulation.
Partnership	Co-construct criteria where feasible; invite reflection on assessment design.	Participate in co-design; reflect on usefulness of processes.	Foster inclusion. Increase ownership. Build assessment culture.

5. Feedback and grading

Feedback and grading are central to assessment because they shape how students understand their progress, regulate their learning and prepare for future tasks. Effective feedback should be timely, developmental and transparent so that students can apply it to improve. Bozkurt et al. (2024; 493) describe this as creating "inner feedback" loops, where learners actively interpret and act on feedback to close gaps in understanding. SUNLearn supports a range of digital feedback tools suited for different teaching contexts.

Table 6: Feedback tools overview

Feedback type	SUNLearn tool	Best suited to	Practical tip
Written comments	Inline annotations	Detailed formative feedback on drafts	Use Assignment tool to embed detailed comments alongside student's text.
Audio feedback	Voice notes	Personalised, accessible support	Include short voice notes for tone and nuance, especially in multilingual contexts.
Rubrics	Rubric tool	Transparency and alignment with criteria	Reuse across assessments to save time.
Automated quizzes	Quiz activity	Instant feedback on low-stakes tasks	Use for diagnostics, self-checks or revision loops.

Tip: Use staged release of feedback in SUNLearn to avoid overload and encourage students to engage sequentially with comments and grades.

5.1. AI-enabled feedback and grading

Generative AI tools are increasingly integrated into assessment feedback processes. They can offer speed and scalability but also raise concerns about quality, fairness and student trust (Perkins et al., 2025). When you use AI to support feedback and/or grading, exercise careful judgement and academic oversight and remain the final authority.

It is useful to differentiate between AI tools that are embedded in institutional learning environments (e.g. feedback assistants or grading plugins integrated into the LMS) and external chatbot platforms where you can upload assessments for comment generation. AI features in the LMS typically offer structured, policy-aligned workflows that support scalability and consistency, while external tools can provide greater flexibility and experimentation but introduce risks regarding context, accuracy and data privacy. We encourage you to weigh these differences carefully, selecting tools that best serve pedagogical goals and uphold fairness and transparency in assessment practice.

Table 7: Examples of AI-supported practices in assessment feedback and grading
This table illustrates selected ways in which AI tools can assist in designing, generating and facilitating feedback. It highlights both the potential pedagogical benefits and the cautions required to maintain quality, fairness and human oversight in assessment processes.

AI-supported practice	Potential benefits	Cautions and good practice
Drafting formative feedback	Reduces turnaround time; provides baseline comments on structure, clarity or grammar.	Always review and personalise AI-generated comments; disclose AI use to students.
Automated grading assistance	Supports consistency on structured tasks (e.g. quizzes, coding exercises).	Use only for objective items; avoid over-reliance for interpretive or creative work.
Feedback-literacy building	Students critique AI-generated feedback against rubrics.	Encourage reflective comparison, highlighting strengths/weaknesses of AI feedback.
Large-class scalability	AI helps generate feedback summaries on class trends.	Frame as supplemental insight; ensure fairness by validating outputs.

Tip: Use AI in formative stages (draft comments, comparison tasks) but avoid outsourcing summative judgement. AI should extend, not replace, the lecturer's role as assessor (Smith, 2024).

6. AI in assessment design

Academic integrity is the foundation of credible assessment. As outlined in the **Academic Integrity in Online Assessment** guide, students must understand that their work must reflect their own learning, and assessments must be designed to support this. The widespread availability of generative AI (GAI) tools is reshaping the assessment landscape. We should not default to prohibition or surveillance. Effective digital assessment encourages the development of both human competencies and AI collaboration skills, anchored in pedagogical and curriculum integrity. Therefore, it is imperative that both staff and students build AI literacies alongside assessment tasks.
This aligns with the Interim SU guidelines Allowable AI Use and Academic Integrity in Assessment, which offer specific recommendations regarding transparent student use of AI tools and lecturer responsibilities in task design. Under these interim guidelines, lecturers are encouraged to design tasks that reward students' critical thinking rather than AI output. Declarations, reflection logs and oral follow-ups are recommended safeguards. Key recommendations include:

- embedding declarations of AI use in assessment rubrics;
- clarifying whether AI is permitted, and for which parts of a task; and
- avoiding blanket bans in favour of critical pedagogy and transparency.

Beyond the SU framework for banning/allowing/requiring AI, you may also draw on the AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) proposed by Perkins et al. (2024). The AIAS outlines a progression of five levels of permitted AI use, from 'No AI' to 'AI exploration'. While this is not a prescriptive SU framework, it can help faculties and course teams to situate their assessment tasks more clearly: for example, distinguishing instances of unaided human reasoning that must be assessed from those where structured AI engagement could enhance learning. Importantly, the scale should not be used as a blanket label or compliance tool (Perkins et al., 2025). Its value lies in guiding faculty- or course-specific discussions about how to scaffold AI literacies, how to signal assessment purposes to students and how to maintain equity.

Box D
Cool things: AI case studies

Across SU, colleagues are already experimenting with AI in assessment to strengthen evaluative judgment, surface weak arguments and references, scaffold self-directed learning and accelerate feedback cycles. Rather than treating 'AI use' as a single stance, these cases show targeted, fit-for-purpose designs (e.g. students critiquing AI-generated essays before a sit-down test, using AI to produce draft code that students must debug, or prompting AI and then auditing its accuracy against course material).

See Cool Things: AI Case Studies (CTL, 25.03.2025) for concise, discipline-specific examples. Please add your own short vignette, including what didn't work and why, via your faculty advisor or the CLT. In this way, we can grow a realistic SU evidence base.

The Digital Education Council's (2025) dual-priority model may be useful for designing scaffolded assessments. This framework balances foundational human competencies with AI collaboration skills. The dual approach cultivates critical digital literacy without compromising integrity.

Table 8: Dual-priority assessment model (adapted from *The next era of assessment*, Digital Education Council & Pearson, 2025)

Priority	Purpose	Examples
1. Assure human competency	Focus on assessing foundational knowledge, critical thinking, discipline-specific reasoning and unaided skills to maintain originality, reasoning quality and academic voice.	Oral assessments; in-person or timed written tasks; critical reflections; problem-solving without digital aids; staged submissions or checkpoints to track progress; process-based grading (evaluating planning, iteration and reflection); oral verification of understanding; application-based tasks in real or simulated contexts; scaffolded problem-solving that requires independent reasoning
2. Develop human-AI collaboration skills	Build students' capacity to use AI tools ethically, critically and effectively in their fields, fostering reflective and responsible engagement.	AI-assisted drafting with critique; transparency logs documenting AI use; AI ethics debates; comparative analysis of AI-generated and human-created work; mixed-mode assessments (combining online, in-person and oral components); submission of document version histories (e.g. Google Docs history); reflective writing on AI tool choices and limitations; collaborative projects that require integrating AI outputs with human judgment

Extension reading: Wicked problems and AI in assessment

For colleagues wanting to explore the broader tensions regarding AI and assessment, Corbin et al. (2025; 1) frame these as "wicked problems" rather than tame, solvable challenges. Their study demonstrates how GAI and assessment design exhibit all ten characteristics of wicked problems, requiring institutions and lecturers to give themselves "permission to compromise, diverge and iterate" rather than chase one definitive solution. This perspective is valuable for recognising that responses to AI in assessment will necessarily be adaptive, context-specific and iterative, rather than uniform or permanent.

Read the article here.

Section D: Teaching and learning with AI

1. Why AI matters for blended teaching-learning-assessment

AI in higher education is situated in everyday teaching and learning routines, assessment design, student writing practices and the broader ecosystem of digital learning. At SU, AI is not regarded as a shortcut to efficiency, but as a set of tools and practices that must be understood, contextualised and guided by sound pedagogy, academic integrity and equity- and values-based thinking. This section lays out a practical and principled pathway for lecturers who want to teach intentionally with AI and embed AI literacy in their modules. It integrates SU's privacy requirements, our emphasis on constructive alignment and a realistic overview of the affordances and limitations of AI.

This section provides a practical starting point for lecturers to:
- Develop a basic understanding of key AI terminology ('AI', 'GAI', 'LLMs', 'chatbots').
- Understand SU's stance on responsible AI use.
- Develop functional AI literacies in yourself and your students.
- Teach with AI across the full TLA cycle (before, during and after teaching activities).
- Make sense of the growing ecosystem of AI tools, platforms and SU-supported workflows.

2. Basic AI terminology

To teach confidently with AI at SU, lecturers need a shared understanding of the core terminology that shapes the field. 'AI', 'generative AI' (GAI), 'large language models' (LLMs)

and 'chatbots' are often used interchangeably, but each refers to a different layer of technology with specific capabilities and risks. Establishing this foundational vocabulary helps you make informed decisions about the tools that are appropriate for TLA. Also, it establishes consistent language usage for the Guide.

Key terminology at a glance

- **AI (artificial intelligence)** is the broad field of technologies that perform tasks requiring human-like intelligence.
- **Generative AI (GAI)** is a subset of AI that creates new content such as text, images, audio or code, based on patterns learned from data.
- **Large language models (LLMs)** are a type of GAI designed specifically for generating and interpreting human language (e.g. GPT, Claude, Gemini).
- **Chatbots** are applications that use AI and that often are powered by LLMs to interact conversationally with users.

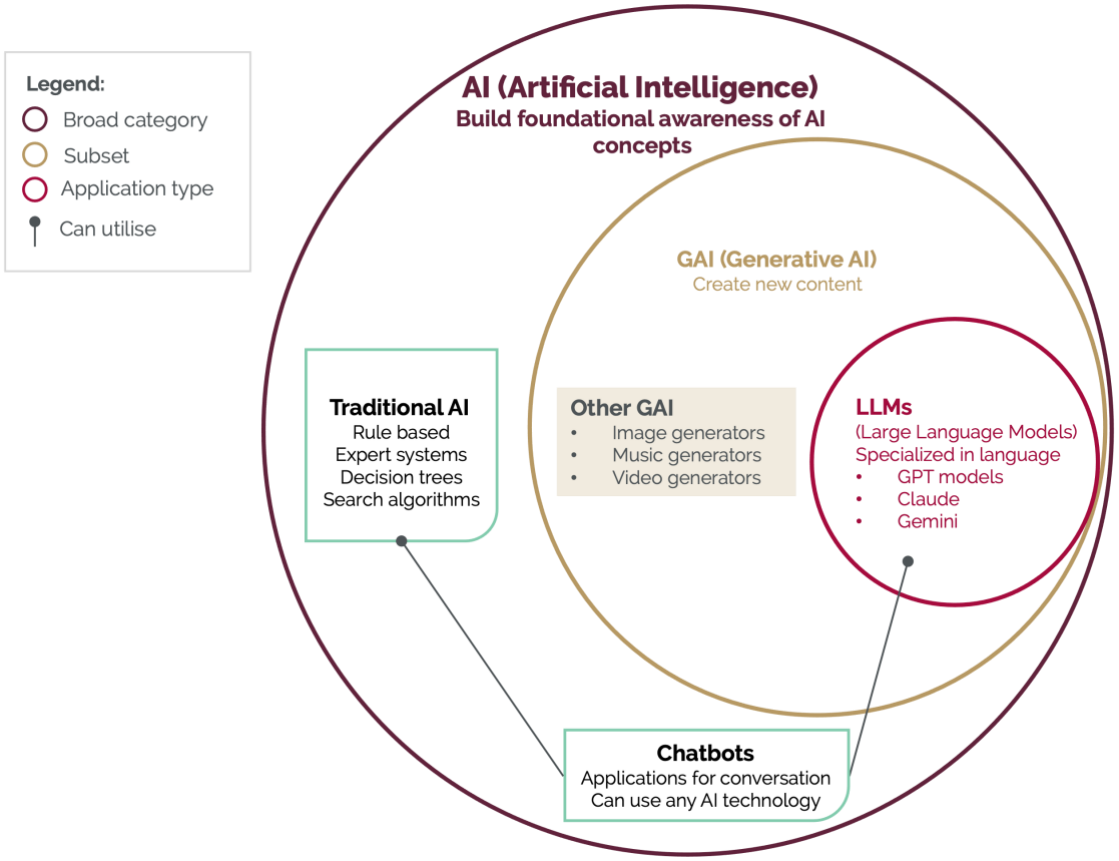


Figure 4: A visual representation of the relationship between AI, GAI, LLMs and chatbots (adapted from Strydom, 2025).

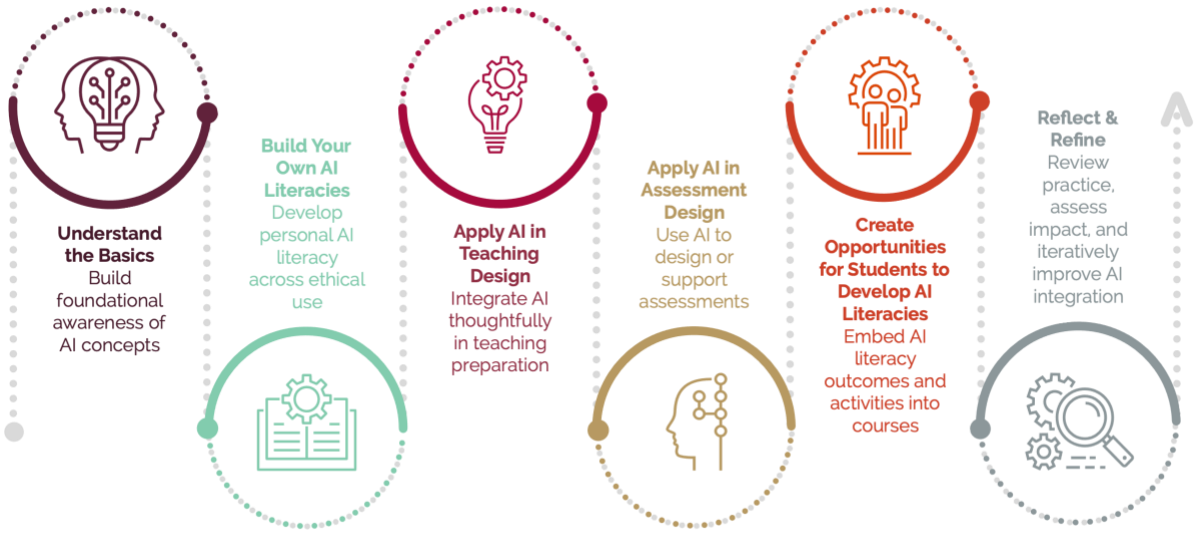


Figure 5: AI Learning Pathway for Lecturers

3. Understanding AI literacies: a working orientation

AI literacy is not a single skill, but a combination of abilities that enable students and lecturers to use AI tools critically, safely and with pedagogical purpose.

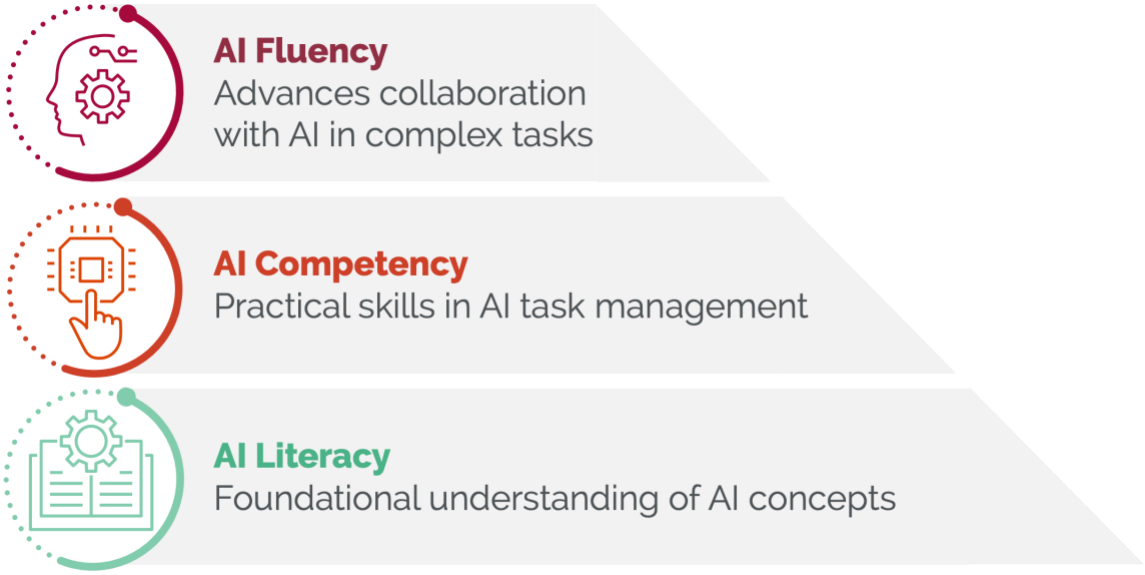


Figure 6: Developing AI Capability in Higher Education

4. Integrating AI into teaching: before, during and after teaching

AI can support various stages of the teaching process, but each stage requires thoughtful alignment with learning outcomes, disciplinary expectations and SU's privacy and data-protection requirements. The structured overview below draws on the upskilling learning unit (ULU) Teaching with AI to help lecturers visualise where AI can support their practice meaningfully.

4.1. Before teaching: AI for course preparation

Many routine or creative preparation activities can be strengthened with AI tools such as ChatGPT or Copilot. These include generating course-level ideas, rewriting learning outcomes, designing activity concepts, preparing quizzes, developing reading summaries and proposing alternative curriculum structures. Within the DeLTA framework, AI can support thinking through teaching and learning activities (T), assessment design (A) and certain reflective elements of curriculum review (C).

AI also supports a range of peripheral tasks that may not resort under subject content but still shape the learning environment; for example, producing groupwork guidance, generating communication templates, designing basic soft-skills micro-lessons and improving accessibility elements in teaching materials. These tasks can improve clarity and reduce administrative load while maintaining coherence with SU's teaching policies.

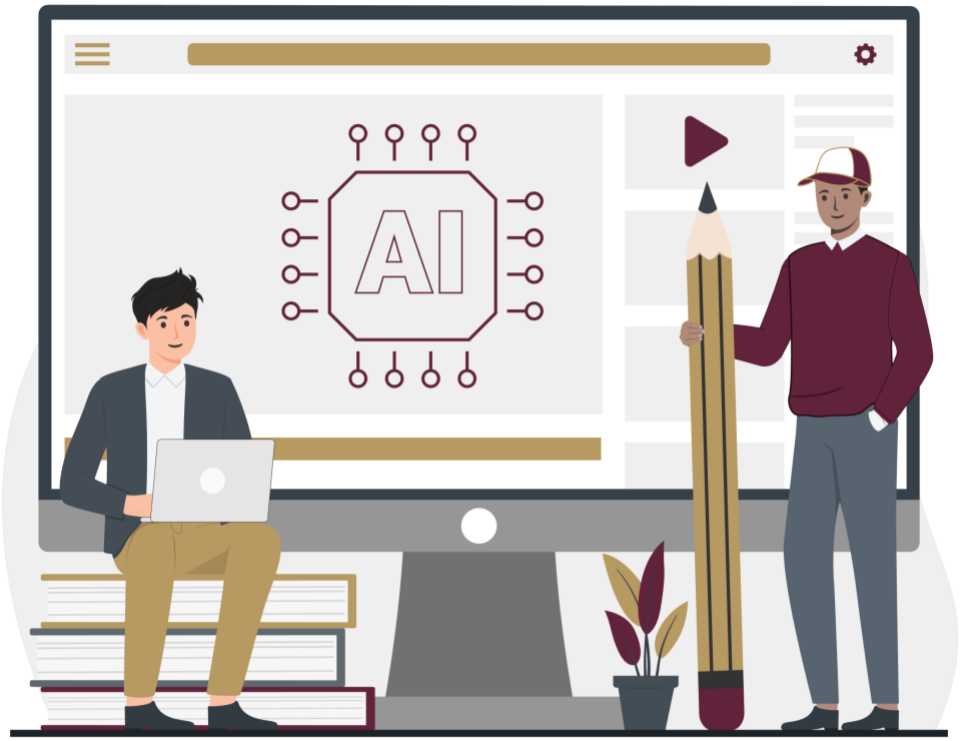


Table 9: Peripheral academic tasks supported by AI

Theme/area	Example tasks	Purpose/pedagogical value
Course communication and organisation	Generate class announcements, reminders or email drafts to common student queries; produce quick summaries of policy or logistical updates; generate FAQs; prepare welcome messages; draft module schedules.	Saves time on repetitive communication while maintaining clarity and consistency across modules.
Groupwork and collaboration support	Draft groupwork guidelines; create role-allocation templates; or generate peer-review rubrics.	Clarifies expectations and reduces administrative coordination in collaborative learning tasks.
Academic skills and soft skills support	Develop time management guides; create study skills micro-lessons; design reflection prompts; produce academic writing tips.	Reinforces transversal competencies that underpin student success but often do not resort under subject-specific teaching.
Accessibility and inclusivity	Suggest alt-text for images; rephrase complex sentences for readability; translate announcements or captions into other SU languages (Afrikaans/isiXhosa/English).	Enhances accessibility and multilingual inclusivity in digital material.
Administrative and logistical support	Produce checklists for assessment setup; create standardised templates for feedback; summarise student survey data; generate progress trackers; produce orientation material.	Streamlines academic administration and allows a stronger focus on teaching quality.

4.2. During teaching: AI for in-class, hybrid and online learning engagement

During teaching, AI can extend and scaffold learning experiences across in-person, hybrid and online environments. Learning design frameworks provide a useful anchor for identifying purposeful use. At SU, Laurillard's conversational framework and six ways of learning have been applied to show how AI tools can support different learning modes.

The table below maps examples of how AI could support each of Laurillard's six ways of learning across three modes: face-to-face (blended), hybrid and online. These examples illustrate how AI can enrich active learning, structured inquiry, peer collaboration and personalised pathways without replacing lecturer presence or pedagogical intent.

Table 10: Six ways of learning – AI tool support

Way of learning	Face-to-face (blended)	Hybrid	Fully online
Read – watch – listen	AI-generated threshold explanations (text, image, audio) are used to prime students before class, as pre-reading or orientation videos.	AI-produced reading guides or comprehension prompts help students process PDF readings or course material before coming to class or joining the online session.	Adaptive learning systems dynamically adjust content difficulty and create personalised pathways based on students' responses.
Inquiry	AI assists students in preparing for inquiry tasks (e.g. generating background questions, identifying key concepts or mapping prior knowledge).	Students co-construct inquiry journals using AI-generated probes or clarifying prompts, which are then discussed in mixed-modal breakout groups.	AI-designed interactive problem-scenarios or digital 'escape room'-type activities guide students through threshold concepts or multi-step analytical challenges.
Practice	Students receive automated feedback on structured tasks (e.g. coding, short-answer exercises or logic tasks), which lecturers review and adapt.	Students complete low-stakes practice tasks with AI-generated hints or model answers, then refine their responses during in-person or online class time.	AI-generated large question pools support formative quizzes with multiple attempts, providing targeted explanations based on students' answer patterns.

Way of learning	Face-to-face (blended)	Hybrid	Fully online
Discuss	AI supports preparation for discussions by helping students clarify their initial arguments, summarise complex readings or identify alternative viewpoints before class.	Students contribute to shared documents or collaborative spaces where AI helps synthesise key ideas for discussion and identify tensions or contrasting positions.	AI summarises long threaded discussions, identifies emerging themes and generates follow-up prompts that lecturers use for further engagement.
Collaborate	AI helps students generate initial roles, plans or templates for group tasks (e.g. project outlines, workflow plans or concept maps).	Students work in mixed-modal groups where AI helps track contributions, suggest next actions or generate revision summaries to support collaboration.	AI supports collaborative writing or design tasks by producing draft components that groups refine, critique, and integrate into shared outputs.
Produce	AI helps students prototype creative artefacts (e.g. first-draft scripts, layout ideas, concept sketches, structure outlines) that are refined in class.	Students iteratively develop artefacts with AI-generated feedback on style, clarity or structure. Class time is used for peer reviewing.	AI-assisted production of digital artefacts (e.g. multimedia, documents presentations) is paired with structured reflection on process, decision-making and authorship.

4.3. After teaching: AI for assessment, feedback and course evaluation

AI can support the after-teaching stage by generating feedback, performing rubric-aligned evaluation and summarising student reflections or course evaluations; for example, producing formative comments on drafts, generating theme summaries from open-ended feedback or analysing sentiment across student responses.

However, caution is imperative regarding data protection and privacy. SU is committed to protecting the privacy of students, employees and partners, in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA). Only institutionally approved tools (such as

Turnitin or Copilot@SU[3]) may be used for processing students' submissions. Any AI-mediated grading or feedback must remain under human judgement, with transparency for students about how you have used AI.

When you explore external or public AI tools, exercise caution regarding:

- how you entered or store student data,
- whether the tool reuses inputs for training, and
- whether outputs can be reproduced, verified or audited.

5. Getting started with teaching with AI in TLA

AI use in teaching and learning must adhere to institutional data-protection and POPIA obligations. Prioritise tools with which SU can guarantee secure handling of institutional and student information. At present, these include:

- **Copilot@SU**, available through Microsoft 365, provides a protected environment for text generation, summarisation and productivity tasks.
- **Primo Research Assistant**, available through SU Library and Information Service, is a generative AI research tool integrated into the Library's discovery system. It allows users to query in natural language and retrieve summaries of academic sources.
- **Turnitin's AI-writing detection functionality has been disabled at SU** following a Senate decision in November 2025[4]. Academic integrity in relation to AI use is therefore supported through pedagogical design, assessment practices, and transparent guidance to students, rather than automated detection tools.

Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement learning opportunities

This list presents key opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of AI in higher education contexts. These resources are offered by or connected to SU and the partners mentioned and can be pursued at your own pace and according to your interest.

[3] Copilot@SU refers to Microsoft 365 Copilot accessed through SU's Microsoft 365 environment. Operation is restricted to institutional data protection guardrails, including: (1) Prompts and responses are not used to train foundation language models. (2) Data is encrypted at rest and in transit. (3) GDPR (the European General Data Protection Regulation) and POPIA requirements are complied with. (4) Existing Microsoft 365 permissions and access controls are respected. (5) All interactions are logged for audit purposes. (6) Student data remains within the Microsoft 365 service boundary with enterprise data protection. Microsoft provides additional copyright protection commitments, including defending customers against copyright infringement claims, when using Copilot with built-in guardrails and content filters. Unlike external AI tools, Copilot@SU ensures that sensitive institutional and student data be processed securely within SU's controlled environment without being shared externally or used for model training purposes.

[4] An official institutional communication outlining this decision will be shared once publicly available.

- **AI literacy short course by the Digital Education Council (DEC):** A foundational programme covering key AI concepts, prompting strategies and ethical considerations for higher education.
    - Enrol in the courses by *signing up with your @sun email address*. It takes 24 to 48 hours for registration to be completed (you will be notified by email).

        - **AI Literacy for All:** a shorter introduction course for staff and students (4 hours' commitment)
        - **Certificate in AI for Higher Education:** a more in-depth certificate-earning course for staff (20 hours' commitment)

- **ULUs in AI for higher education**:
    - *Reimagining higher education teaching in the age of AI*
    - *Higher education learning in the age of AI*
    - *Higher education assessing in the age of AI*
    - *Higher education teaching in the age of AI*
    - *Values for higher education in the age of AI*
- **Assessment, Learning and AI**: This SU short course (60 notional hours) explores how assessment, feedback and teaching practices can evolve in an age of accessible generative AI.
- **AI-mediated Multimedia: Transforming Content Creation**: A practical guide to using generative AI to create multimedia (images, audio, video) with ethical and pedagogical awareness.

If you want to keep track of emerging AI tools used, Ithaka S-R Generative AI Product Tracker offers a continually updated overview of general-purpose, teaching and learning, research, writing, coding and image-generation tools that are circulating in the sector.

6. Evaluating AI affordances and limitations

While generative AI can enhance many aspects of TLA and research, it is essential to evaluate each tool in relation to what it affords and what it potentially displaces. GAI introduces real affordances for speed, accessibility and idea generation, but every gain carries a corresponding trade-off that can dilute disciplinary reasoning, obscure sources or shift cognitive work away from students. Before adopting any tool, evaluate the specific affordance you need, the limits that accompany it and what may be lost if AI performs the task instead of the lecturer or the student.

The table below provides a general overview of where generative AI supports academic work effectively, and where its limitations demand human oversight, contextual discernment and ethical restraint.

Table 11: Strengths and limitations of AI tools

Strengths	Limitations
Generates quick first-draft ideas, examples, explanations and multilingual phrasing.	Overstates importance: inflates simple ideas, uses dramatic turns of phrase and produces text that sounds 'profound' without substance.
Helps create accessible materials by means of simplified explanations and alternative formats.	Tends towards shallow reasoning cloaked in formal language; avoids naming actors and often produces vague commentary.
Supports universal design with summaries, variations, analogies and tailored representations.	Leans towards promotional or overly enthusiastic tone unless explicitly guided towards neutrality.
Speeds up routine drafting (rubrics, feedback templates, lesson structures administrative text).	Adds unnecessary didactic statements or metacommentary that interrupts the flow of academic writing.
Assists with multimedia generation (images, layout ideas, audio or video drafts).	Produces predictable closing structures or 'neat' summaries that overlook nuance.
Synthesises long documents or forum posts and identifies patterns.	Falls into repetitive linguistic habits such as forced contrasts or patterned sentence structures.
Provides scaffolding for learning (generates questions, worked examples, restatements).	Uses vague authorities ('experts say') and cannot provide verifiable sources without explicit constraints and checking.
Supports efficient feedback processes by generating variations of comments or feedforward suggestions.	Uses flowery synonyms or unnecessary phrasing changes instead of clear repetition when repetition is pedagogically useful.
Aids multilingual support for isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English.	Produces exaggerated contrasts ('from X to Y') that read stylistically rather than analytically.
Extends lecturer presence through prompts, peer-activity structures and scaffolded interactions.	Generates text that feels overly tidy or mechanically structured, missing the complexity of academic reasoning.

Enables low-risk experimentation with task redesign and formative assessment ideas.	Can produce factual inaccuracies or hallucinated references.
Supports consistency across modules by means of standardised communication or templates.	Reproduces bias or inequity patterns unless deliberately corrected.
Saves time by generating variations on questions or assessment artefacts.	Raises privacy and data-security concerns when non-SU tools are used.

Conclusion

Effective blended teaching, learning and assessment at SU emerges from deliberate pedagogical choices rather than technology alone. This Guide has provided foundational principles, practical strategies and institutional resources to support you in designing digitally enabled learning experiences that are pedagogically sound, inclusive and aligned with student needs.

Successful blended learning requires thoughtful integration of learning outcomes, activities and assessments, grounded in frameworks such as DeLTA, TPACK and Laurillard's conversational approach. By building both assessment literacy and AI literacies, you create environments where students develop disciplinary expertise alongside critical capacities for lifelong learning.

Consider your blended learning design as a living practice that evolves through experimentation, feedback and collaboration. Start small, focus on alignment, and draw on the resources outlined here; from SUNLearn tools to AI integration strategies. Seek support from your faculty's blended learning coordinator or the division of teaching and learning enhancement centres and remain open to iterative refinement.

Ultimately, blended learning at SU depends on our collective commitment to creating teaching experiences that are intellectually rigorous, values-driven and deeply attuned to the contexts in which our students learn. By applying the principles explored in this Guide, you contribute to a culture of teaching excellence that positions both you and your students to navigate contemporary higher education with confidence, creativity and care.

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