

Does AI Policy Matter for Learning? Instructor Discretion Across the Universities of Wisconsin

This SoTL project documents AI policies across UW and how they relate to student learning. We examined the heterogeneity in policies across institutional mission, appointment type, discipline, and career stage, capturing nuances that may systematically shape student AI use. Syllabi were collected and coded to capture the range of AI policies. Then, instructors were surveyed to assess associations between policies and student learning outcomes. Results indicate substantial heterogeneity in permitted AI use; severe consequences for policy violations; and common suspicions of policy violations. Importantly, however, student mastery appears unrelated to AI policies, and AI policies did not systematically differ across most instructor demographics (except for gender). These null findings appear reassuring. To the extent AI policies influence learning, their diversity does not appear to exert a detectable influence above and beyond other sources of variation and instructor-authored policies do not appear to differ in a way that systematically disadvantages students.