

MOLLOY UNIVERSITY

School of Education and Human Services

Department of Teacher Education

EDU5900-14 Philosophy of Co-Mentoring: AI-Assisted Research in Project-Based Environments
(asynchronous) Dr. Melissa Jac **(3 credits)**

Fall Semester, 2026

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Jacobs

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Office Hours: Online Anytime

Course Description:

This is an asynchronous course designed to practically engage teachers in using AI platforms to support student mentorships within your classrooms. It combines the leveraging of AI technology to support real student to student engagement because as we increasingly rely on computers for everyday interactions, the power of human connection requires greater peer to peer skill development. Reciprocal mentoring programs are designed to both sustain and engage individuals in a successful evidence-based method for greater productivity in K–12 and beyond. Building networks within the classroom between student learners to work towards building community, creating collaborative relationships while critically thinking about the work around them helps to build more resilient students. Ultimately, taking that model and establishing those networks between stakeholders to break down silos will be introduced through a project-based approach.

A distinguishing feature of this course is the intentional integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a co-research tool. Students will learn to leverage AI platforms to support literature discovery, synthesize emerging research, and generate creative solutions for project-based learning challenges. Rather than replacing human inquiry, AI serves as a thinking partner—enhancing the reciprocal mentorship model by modeling collaborative, iterative problem-solving. Critical engagement with AI-generated content, including evaluating bias, accuracy, and ethical implications, is woven throughout the course.

Shared Vision:

The Molloy University Teacher Education faculty has derived its vision for the exemplary teacher from the University's mission statement, the four pillars of the Dominican tradition, comments and input from the Professional Education Unit's Advisory Board and degree candidates as well as numerous faculty discussions rooted in the department's knowledge base which undergirds the initial and advanced programs' curriculum, pedagogy, and values.

The teaching professionals who complete Molloy's teacher preparation programs are distinguished by their ability to exemplify and promote core values in their own teaching. These values include:

- Belief that all children can learn
- Learner-centered and value-centered curriculum and pedagogy
- Ethics and spirituality
- Intellectual curiosity
- Independence and risk-taking, while promoting collective identity and responsibility
- Diversity, multiculturalism, and pluralism, including divergent thinking
- Passion for teaching
- Commitment to students and their communities
- Civic responsibility through the promotion of social justice and interdependence
- Commitment to democracy

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Address the reciprocal design in mentoring and articulate their role as change agents
- Compare the differences between reciprocal and other types of mentorship
- Understand the practical design features of reciprocal mentorship that can be incorporated into practice
- Analyze the impact reciprocal mentorship design has in challenging the mainstream mentoring model and its weaknesses
- Assess how reciprocity supports equity and inclusion in its design
- Develop and implement strategies for building reciprocal mentorship networks within their own institutional contexts
- Apply AI-assisted research tools to identify, synthesize, and critically evaluate academic literature related to reciprocal mentorship and collaborative learning
- Utilize AI as a creative partner in designing project-based learning solutions that are responsive to diverse institutional contexts
- Critically examine the ethical dimensions of AI use in educational settings, including issues of bias, equity, and academic integrity

Course Format:

This course is offered in an online format, and will be through Canvas, Molloy's learning management system. The course opens two days before the start date. Weekly sessions combine asynchronous activities and discussion posts. Responses to discussion posts are due by noon the following day. This section is offered 11/30-12/11 and the final project will be due 12/9

AI as a Research Tool: Philosophy and Practice

This course treats Artificial Intelligence not as a shortcut, but as a co-mentor in the research process, mirroring the very reciprocal philosophy at the heart of this course. Just as effective mentorship involves listening, questioning, and building on one another's strengths, working productively with AI requires intentional prompting, critical reflection, and iterative refinement.

How AI Will Be Used in This Course

- Literature Discovery & Synthesis: Students will use AI tools (such as Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, or similar platforms) to locate and summarize relevant research, identify key themes across sources, and surface connections between the academic literature and their own institutional contexts.
- Creative Problem-Solving: AI will serve as a brainstorming partner in developing project-based learning solutions. Students will use structured prompting techniques to generate, evaluate, and refine ideas for their reciprocal mentorship proposals and stakeholder presentations.
- Research Support: AI may assist with drafting outlines, organizing arguments, and suggesting frameworks. All AI-assisted content must be critically reviewed, fact-checked against primary sources, and properly acknowledged in submitted work.
- Reflective Practice: Each week, students will briefly document how they engaged with AI tools—what worked, what didn't, and what the experience revealed about their own thinking and research process.

Guidelines for Ethical AI Use

AI use in this course must align with Molloy University's Academic Integrity Policy. The following principles apply:

- Transparency: Students must disclose when and how AI tools were used in any submitted assignment. A brief AI Use Statement should be appended to relevant work.
- Verification: AI-generated content is not a primary source. All claims, citations, and data drawn from or suggested by AI must be verified against peer-reviewed literature before inclusion.

- Authorship: The ideas, analysis, and conclusions in your work must be your own. AI may support your thinking, but it may not replace it. Submitting AI-generated text as your own original writing without disclosure constitutes academic dishonesty.
- Equity & Bias Awareness: Students will critically examine AI outputs for potential bias, cultural assumptions, and limitations—applying the same lens of equity and inclusion that guides the course’s mentorship philosophy.

Recommended AI Tools for Research:

- Claude (Anthropic) – claude.ai – Recommended for literature synthesis, structured writing support, and brainstorming
- Perplexity AI – perplexity.ai – Recommended for real-time academic search with cited sources
- Google Scholar + AI summaries – For locating peer-reviewed journal articles
- ChatGPT (OpenAI) – chatgpt.com – For ideation, outlining, and drafting support

Students are encouraged to experiment with multiple tools and reflect on their affordances and limitations as part of the course’s critical inquiry process.

Required Readings, Videos, and Other Materials:

Articles and resources will be posted on Canvas throughout the course for easy access. In addition, the following texts are *recommended*:

- Kossak, S. (2011). *Reaching In, Reaching Out: Reflections on Reciprocal Mentoring*.
- Different AI tools TBA

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Grading Breakdown

Reflection Posts (4 × 10%)	40%
Research Assignment	20%
Reciprocal Mentorship Project Proposal	40%

Total 100%

Description of Assignments

Reflection Posts (40%)

There will be 4 reflection posts that specifically address the assigned articles for those weeks. Each reflection post should be approximately one-half page in length and include 2 supporting citations drawn from the assigned readings. Beginning with Week 2, each post should also include a brief AI Use Note (2–3 sentences) describing how AI tools were used in your research process for that week—what you searched, what you found useful, and how you critically evaluated the results. Articles will be posted on Canvas for easy access.

Research Assignment (20%)

Students will research the effectiveness of reciprocal mentorship within a school or work setting among peers. This paper is designed to test theory through evidence-based practice and requires a deeper look at k-12 schools and their current framework for collaborative spaces. The assignment should be 3 pages in length and include 3 academic journal sources cited in appropriate APA style. AI tools may be used to support literature discovery and outlining; all AI assistance must be disclosed in an appended AI Use Statement, and all sources must be verified against original materials. Address the following questions:

- What steps would you enact to create a collaborative environment?
- How would you engage your community and encourage their involvement?
- What are 3–4 supporting examples from other collaborative efforts in the literature?

Reciprocal Mentorship Project Proposal (40%)

Propose a reciprocal mentorship project that promotes a current institutional social change process incorporating social justice and multicultural and global perspectives. This proposal should demonstrate creative, project-based thinking and may be developed in collaboration with AI as an ideation partner. Students should document their AI-assisted brainstorming process and reflect on how human judgment shaped and refined the final proposal. The proposal should include:

- A clear articulation of the problem or opportunity within your institution
- A project-based learning design that embeds reciprocal mentorship principles
- A description of how AI tools were used in the creative development process and how outputs were critically evaluated
- Connection to social justice, equity, and multicultural perspectives

Molloy University and School of Education and Human Services Policies and Supports:
Expectations of Academic Integrity for All Students

[Honor Pledge and Academic Honesty Policy](#)

Course Withdrawals

View [Withdrawal Policy](#) for potential financial implications

View [the Academic Calendar](#) and/or the course syllabus for the last day to withdraw dates

Incompletes

[Incompletes Policy](#)

Health and Wellness

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#)

Center for Access and Disability (Access)

[Center for Access and Disability](#)

Technical Support

[Student Account, Technology, and Canvas](#)

Ally for Canvas

[Supportive Tools and Resources/ Ally](#)

Use of Proctorio for Exams/Quizzes (if applicable)

[Proctorio Resources for Students](#)

Email Accounts

Students are expected to communicate via their Molloy email account or through Canvas throughout the semester. Those who use a non-Molloy account may miss important messages. Students are responsible for responding to all forms of communication related to this course in a timely manner. Instructors will respond to emails from students within 24 hours. When emailing the instructor(s), please include the course number and section you are enrolled in.

APA Manuscript Style

All manuscripts in the field of education are written in the style format of the American Psychological Association. Candidates in the Graduate Education Programs are required to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). (2010). American Psychological Association.

All papers written in every course must adhere to the manuscript prescriptions defined in this manual.