

Beyond Chatbots: Building AI Competencies for University Teaching

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In a world where everyone, from professors to students, uses artificial intelligence tools on a daily basis, their use in university teaching is not just about learning how to operate them, but about a broader need: helping faculty understand what these systems are, what they can do, their social and ethical implications, and how to genuinely use them in their own courses.

The AI literacy program for university faculty undertaken by the Sapienza Teaching and Learning Center has sought to address this need through open-source materials and a series of webinars dedicated to different topics, from the fundamentals and prompting to agentic systems and image generation, open to a broad audience of faculty, administrative staff, and students.

The wide participation, with more than 600 attendees online and in person for each webinar, clearly shows that interest in these technologies is multidisciplinary, extensive, and still too little covered by easily accessible material. It is essential to build the competencies needed to evaluate these tools, understand when they can be useful, and integrate them responsibly into teaching. The experience has also made clear that training cannot remain tied to occasional initiatives: to become a stable part of the university, it needs accessible platforms, ongoing support, and dedicated resources. In this talk, I will share this concrete experience and what is needed to turn the initial training and experimentation activities into an ordinary capability of the University.