Showing Our Work With AI: Our Students and Their Coursework

A FLEX workshop

This workshop explores the integration of AI tools for engaged learning and task completion. Our focus will be on students and the circumstances of our course design that may lead to an overreliance on AI tools to complete coursework (asynchronous tasks). The first part of the workshop will look at examples of coursework completed by various students, some using AI and some not. The second half of the workshop will engage discussion, to reflect on our student's individual experiences and to question the learning our assignments promote: when and why does our course design invite students to use AI tools? We hope you will join us to share your teaching practices and how you hope to support students using AI.

A Frame - There's too much; humbly, here's a few voices:

John McWhorter, professor Columbia University

[What we can learn from the Tower of Babel](#)

"As mesmerized as I will always be, given my personal and professional interests, by the thousands of languages out there, the Tower of Babel story gets at something. If there had only ever been a single language in the world, it is hard to imagine that anyone would wish there were 7,000 different ones, such that speakers of one couldn't communicate with speakers of the others. The new technology is getting us past that challenge…

Because I love trying to learn languages and am endlessly fascinated by their varieties and complexities, I am working hard to wrap my head around this new reality. **With an iPhone handy and an appropriate app downloaded, foreign languages will no longer present most people with the barrier or challenge they once did. Learning to genuinely speak a new language will hardly be unknown.** It will continue to beckon, for instance, for those actually relocating to a new country. And it will persist with people who want to engage with

literature or media in the original language, as well as those of us who find pleasure in mastering these new codes just because they are 'there.' In other words, it will likely become an artisanal pursuit, of interest to a much smaller but more committed set of enthusiasts. And weird as that is, it is in its way a kind of progress."

Dr. Jeremy Douglas, professor at UCSB

[Writing to and From Language Models](#)

"If we conduct a thought experiment where a future language model is beyond General AI, it's just the smartest entity to have ever existed in the universe, and it's free…there is one thing about prompt engineering and this rhetoric, this writing, that I think will never go away, which is captured in a lot of the old myths about the 3 wishes and the genie, which is under specifying about your beliefs and your desires is not a tractable problem. Period. **No godlike entity, no all knowing external being with any access to all of the magic of physics of the known universe can ever relieve you of the issue of needing to be able to articulate what it is you wanted.** So, if you don't care–like if you're like, I actually don't care what the essay says, I just want it to be plausible and I want it to get an A–then you don't have a problem. If you *do* care about what you're saying and you ask an all powerful entity to say what you would, what you would have said, and you're not able to express yourself, then you are not, you're not actually relieved of a lot of the power of prompt Engineering. **In other words, "AutoGPT" can only take us so far until it runs into something that is probably fundamental to expression: What do you believe? And what do you want?"**

Maya Bohnick, undergrad student at Harvard

[GPT-4 Can Already Pass Freshman Year at Harvard](#)

"while GPT-4 might sometimes copy someone else's ideas in a way that might make a professor suspicious of plagiarism, **more often it generates the type of fairly unoriginal synthesis writing that's rewarded in non-advanced university classes**. It's worth noting that GPT-4 doesn't write the same thing every time when given the same prompt, and **over time the chatbot will almost certainly get even better at creating a writing tone that feels personal and unique; it's possible GPT-4 might even learn each person's writing style and adapt its responses to fit that style**.

This technology has made cheating so simple — and for now, so hard to catch — that I expect many students will use it when writing essays. According to a 2020 study from the International Center for Academic Integrity, about [60 percent of college students admit to cheating](#) in some form."

An ENGL 100 Student's Journal Reflection, Summer 2023

"AI and writing: The tools built into Microsoft Word with definition lookup and synonym lookup by the right click of a mouse have been a constant companion. What I should have counted on this semester was the use of chatGPT. **Ensuring I held to my integrity with my writings, chatGPT was not a substitute for essay writing** because that would prohibit me from learning anything as a writer and would have been ethically wrong. **What the AI tool did do, however, was assist me** in getting my thoughts organized. I could freely ask it to show examples of sources I was already investigating…Then from there, I could narrow down my internet search using improved keywords. **Sometimes it's messy, but living in the information age is cool.**"

What do we mean by AI tools?

Tools embedded in digital writing spaces that assist with and complete tasks
- Autocorrect, autocomplete
- Voice to text, text to voice
- Text translation and association (synonym recommendation)
- Object/subject identification (i.e. Turnitin) and summarization
- Content generation

Who is Using AI?

- Honors students (especially those taking on 20+ credit units)
- Returning students discovering tools integrated in Word, Docs, Snapchat, etc
- Neural diverse students who process orally or visually or textually
- Multilingual students laboring and learning in their home languages
- Overworked, overwhelmed, and unmoored students…so all students

Coursework & Learning: 3 Assignments in ENGL 100

Reading Journal

4 Notes and 1 Stay on Track per week
- Note = close response to a lecture or content; 75 words: summary + quotes + response
- Stay on Track = a "snapshot" of process: reflection or outline or response to feedback

Discussion Replies

25 Replies by semester's end
- Reply when you feel engaged in a current Discussion
- Edify; Otherwise, no topic or word count requirement

Major Essay Final Draft

- Essay 2: 1500 word critical response to an argument of substance and length
- Essay 3: 2400 word research-based position that builds on prior ENGL 100 work

Student Work: Journal, Replies, Drafts

[Examples here](#)

Reflection Questions & Open Discussion

Tempting Questions

How do I eliminate the possibility that students will use AI to complete their coursework?
- Do I require all students to write Journal Entries on paper?
- Do I stop asking students to reply to Discussion posts?
- Do I require students to rewrite every passage tagged by an AI detector?
- Do I proctor all major assessments of learning and skill development?

Other Questions

What evidence of learning *is* apparent in the coursework our students complete using AI tools?

How are we reflecting on our course design to mitigate circumstances that lead to simple, plausible task completion?
- Is the learning engaging and the **experience** meaningful?
- Is there enough **time** to complete the task meaningfully?
- Are the **modes** of contributing/participating familiar and/or modeled?

What equity implications are raised by considering AI as a tool for learning as well as an efficient pathway to completing tasks?

My ENGL 100 Syllabus Policy

Pursue your growth as a writer, as a recent student shares in their Reading Journal Reflection:

"AI and writing: The tools built into Microsoft Word with definition lookup and synonym lookup by the right click of a mouse have been a constant companion. What I should have counted on this semester was the use of chatGPT. Ensuring I held to my integrity with my writings, chatGPT was not a substitute for essay writing because that would prohibit me from learning anything as a writer and would have been ethically wrong. What the AI tool did do, however, was assist me in getting my thoughts organized. I could freely ask it to show examples of sources I was already investigating…Then from there, I could narrow down my internet search using improved keywords. Sometimes it's messy, but living in the information age is cool."

All ENGL 100 projects invite you to read and write with your interests *and* your audience's attention in mind. We will study a process for generating, sharing, and revising drafts that leads us to use resources and tools uniquely. In this process, be ambitious and be honest. What does that mean? Rely on *everything* to explore and then shape *what you feel* is worth *our attention*. As you do, acknowledge the authors whose ideas and language you find enriching and revise A.I generated content your audience finds plausible but lacking in substance and a point of view worth attending to. This is what it is to read, think, and write with *intention* and *integrity*.

My ENGL 100 Syllabus Description of Drafting Processes

We're writing 4 Essays. The first two are shorter (1200 words), intended as warm-ups. The second two (1500, 2400 words) are more complex. Staying on Track assignments will guide you by asking you to share "snapshots" of your progress: brainstorms, body paragraphs, and reflections. You will receive feedback from me to help you feel confident about [the papers we're writing in this class](), and you will respond to my feedback so that *grading* becomes a *conversation*. Showing your work is important in ENGL 100; before I grade or share feedback on a draft, I need to know the story of how your reading/writing process shaped that draft. You may describe this to me directly at the top of each draft, or engage authentically with Before, During, and Stay on Track work to demonstrate this process.

My ENGL 100 Essay Rubric - ***Threshold Requirement

Process - A Threshold Requirement	Complete	Incomplete
	The final draft clearly uses ideas and language from Reading Journal Notes, During Class work, and Stay on Track Reflections and Draft Outlines.	The final draft does not make use of Reading Journal Notes, During Class work, or Stay on Track Reflections and Draft Outlines. I am having trouble seeing your process and understanding how you wrote this essay. Before I can grade your writing and offer you feedback, I want to hear the story of how you wrote this draft. Let's connect soon in email and/or office hours.

***By "threshold" I mean if students does not meet this criteria, I do not mark the other categories of the rubric or provide feedback directly on their work. Instead, I begin a conversation with the student who can supply process materials and/or describe their process in a discussion with me that is overall focused on the goals they've set for themselves as readers and writers