

AI Helps PhD Thesis Planning, PhD Defense, and First Job Talk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI HELPS PhD THESIS PLANNING, PhD DEFENSE, and FIRST JOB TALK

In this innovative and interactive project, we demonstrate the groundbreaking new concept of "guided creation." This approach represents a synthesis between human intuition and AI capabilities, offering a powerful mechanism for synergistic collaboration. We showcased "guided creation" through the simulation of PhD thesis development, the PhD "orals," and a subsequent job talk. The academic work looks at the influence of Charles Dickens on Mark Twain. Our human-AI dialogue navigated from conceptualizing the thesis to examining its implications, including a prospective job talk and possible future research collaborations.

Each stage of this project was crafted through a blend of human prompts and creative AI responses, which shaped the direction of the conversation. To bring together all aspects of the project, AI also offered a comprehensive summary of the whole project, and wrote a 2-minute video script. Energizing AI not only in the creation process but also in summarizing the project for potential readers underlines the versatility of the deliverables that comprise this project.

Guided creation brings a transformative perspective to traditional tasks by enabling AI to augment human capabilities, with the goal of greater depth and options. By demonstrating its application in literary research, this methodology gives readers a concrete example of a mode of interaction with AI, with fresh possibilities for critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving.

AI prompts in RED.

Machine output in BLACK.

Blog: <https://bqwebpage.blogspot.com/2023/05/ai-helps-phd-thesis-planning-phd.html>

I have found that a good way to interact with GPT4 is to ask for the executive summary of a PhD thesis on the topic of interest.

For example, if I am interested in the influence of Charles Dickens on Mark Twain, I can ask for the executive summary of a PhD on just that topic.

Often GPT4 divides the PhD into five or six chapters. If I feel its initial summary of a chapter is a little vague, I can ask for a longer description of the chapter. Let's go.



ChatGPT

I'm glad to hear you've found an enjoyable and insightful way to interact with the model! Asking for **an executive summary of a hypothetical PhD thesis** can certainly provide a structured way of learning about complex topics.

ORGANIZING THE PhD

Let's say you're interested in a PhD thesis titled: **"The Influence of Charles Dickens on Mark Twain: A Comparative Study."** An executive summary might look like this:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter provides an overview of both authors, their works, their cultural and historical context, and their writing styles. It lays out the purpose of the study and explains why exploring the influence of Dickens on Twain is a valuable topic of research.

Chapter 2: Charles Dickens: His Life and Work

A comprehensive look into Dickens' writing style, themes, and character development. This chapter studies Dickens' societal influence during his time and his impact on literature.

Chapter 3: Mark Twain: His Life and Work

Similar to the previous chapter, but focusing on Twain. It explores how his work was influenced by the societal changes occurring in America, as well as by other literary figures, including Dickens.

Chapter 4: Direct Influences and References

This chapter analyzes the direct references to Dickens and his work in Twain's writing, including both explicit mentions and potential allusions.

Chapter 5: Thematic and Stylistic Comparisons

This chapter delves into the thematic and stylistic parallels between the two authors. It explores how Twain may have been influenced by Dickens in his approach to societal commentary, characterization, humor, and use of dialect.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications

The final chapter concludes the study, summarizing the key findings regarding Dickens' influence on Twain. It also discusses the broader implications of these influences on American literature and culture.

If you'd like more detail on any of these chapters, feel free to ask!

Great outline.

As a human, I needed to provide only a few words in the general direction of a topic, and the six chapter structure appears from the AI. Your early remarks on the high points (in this first exchange) is a great way to help me take my own thinking further.

(I call this way of interacting with AI, "Guided Creation.")

ChatGPT

I'm glad to hear that this approach works well for you! Structuring a complex topic into the form of a hypothetical PhD thesis allows for a comprehensive yet digestible understanding of the subject. Each chapter offers a concise summary of a specific aspect, helping to clarify the big picture while also allowing for deeper exploration if desired. This kind of dialogue can effectively guide your learning process and facilitate critical thinking about the topic at hand. Feel free to direct any other topics my way you'd like to explore in this format!

It's almost in analogy to skeuomorphic, I am asking for an answer that takes the form of a familiar intellectual structure.

ChatGPT

That's an excellent analogy! Skeuomorphism, in design, refers to making items represented resemble their real-world counterparts. Here, by structuring the information like a PhD thesis, you're **leveraging** a familiar academic framework to better understand and organize the information, even though there isn't a real PhD thesis. It's an interesting application of the concept of skeuomorphism to learning and information processing. It allows you to explore and comprehend complex subjects in a structured and systematic way.

Please make a more detailed and deeper view of chapter 4.

ChatGPT

Absolutely, let's delve deeper into **Chapter 4: "Direct Influences and References."**

Chapter 4: Direct Influences and References

In this chapter, we analyze and interpret the explicit and implicit references to Charles Dickens in Mark Twain's works.

4.1 Explicit References to Dickens:

Twain made explicit references to Dickens in his personal writings and speeches. For instance, in his travel book, "Innocents Abroad," Twain wrote with admiration about Dickens' description of certain places. The analysis of such remarks reveals Twain's respect and admiration for Dickens.

4.2 Allusions in Literary Works:

This section delves into Twain's novels and short stories to identify any possible allusions to Dickens' works. Particular attention is given to shared themes or character archetypes that suggest Dickens' influence.

4.3 Shared Social Commentary:

Both Dickens and Twain used their work to critique societal issues, with Dickens often focusing on the hardships of the urban poor, while Twain targeted the hypocrisy and injustices of slavery-era South. This section explores whether Twain's social commentary was influenced by Dickens' approach.

4.4 Shared Techniques:

This section examines stylistic techniques employed by Twain that appear influenced by Dickens, such as their shared knack for colorful and memorable characterization, humor, and regional dialect.

4.5 Interpretation of References:

The final part of this chapter synthesizes the findings, interpreting how these references and allusions might demonstrate the extent of Dickens' influence on Twain's work. This involves a critical analysis of how these references to Dickens might have shaped Twain's narrative style, themes, and characterization.

This more detailed overview of Chapter 4 provides a clearer understanding of how the study would approach identifying and interpreting Dickens' direct influence on Twain.

Please provide a more detailed and deeper view of chapter 5.

Of course, let's dive deeper into **Chapter 5: "Thematic and Stylistic Comparisons."**

Chapter 5: Thematic and Stylistic Comparisons

This chapter examines the thematic and stylistic parallels between Dickens and Twain, aiming to pinpoint areas where Dickens may have influenced Twain's work.

5.1 Thematic Parallels:

This section analyzes the recurring themes in both authors' works. Common themes, such as class struggle, societal corruption, and the loss of innocence, are explored to find out if Twain's treatment of these subjects bears any imprint of Dickens' influence.

5.2 Stylistic Parallels:

This part looks at the unique styles of each author, exploring whether Twain adopted any stylistic elements from Dickens. This analysis includes the use of satire, humor, and depiction of characters.

5.3 Use of Dialect and Language:

Both Dickens and Twain are known for their ability to capture regional dialects and class-specific speech patterns in their writing. This section looks at whether Twain's use of dialect and language shows any signs of Dickensian influence.

5.4 Characterization:

Here we compare how the two authors create and develop their characters. We particularly look at how they depict socio-economically disadvantaged characters, a common feature in both authors' works.

5.5 Social Commentary:

Both Dickens and Twain used their literature to comment on societal issues of their times. This section examines the extent to which Dickens' approach to social commentary may have influenced Twain's own societal critiques.

5.6 Interpretation of Parallels:

This final section interprets the identified thematic and stylistic parallels. It tries to discern to what extent these similarities can be attributed to Dickens' influence on Twain or whether they might be due to independent but similar responses to the societal conditions of their respective environments.

This deep dive into Chapter 5 would provide a thorough analysis of the possible thematic and stylistic influences that Charles Dickens had on Mark Twain's works.

####

AN ADDED SECTION

I went back to the AI after the end of the project and inserted the following question. In this supplement, I ask the AI to think of "Dickens on Twain" as a general topic, and provide 10 more narrow specific topics suitable for a PhD, such as "Dickens' humor, influence on Twain's humor." Here are the ten responses.

Here are ten potential **specific topics** for a PhD thesis studying the influence of Charles Dickens on Mark Twain:

1. **"The Pen as a Social Sword:** How Dickens' Social Commentary Influenced Twain's Depictions of Inequality."
2. **"Humor as a Social Mirror:** Analyzing the Influence of Dickens' Comedic Techniques on Twain's Satirical Style."
3. **"The Evolution of Character Development:** Tracing the Impact of Dickens' Characterization Techniques on Twain's Literary Constructs."
4. **"Narrative Innovation:** How Dickens' Use of Multiple Perspectives Shaped Twain's Storytelling Techniques."
5. **"Borrowed Scenery:** The Influence of Dickens' Urban Landscapes on Twain's Depictions of the American Frontier."
6. **"Breaking the Class Ceiling:** Analyzing the Influence of Dickens' Portrayal of Social Mobility on Twain's Characters."
7. **"Literary Realism and Beyond:** Tracing the Influence of Dickens' Realistic Fiction on Twain's Literary Style."
8. **"Growing Up with Dickens:** How Dickens' Child Protagonists Influenced Twain's Depictions of Childhood and Adolescence."
9. **"Moral Lessons in Pages:** Understanding the Influence of Dickens' Use of Morality Tales on Twain's Ethical Narratives."
10. **"From London to the Mississippi:** The Impact of Dickens' Narrative Structure on Twain's Storytelling."

Each of these topics offers a distinct angle to explore the overarching theme of Dickens' influence on Twain and can provide a rich ground for detailed research and analysis.

End of insert. Back to the original question series.

####

THE PHD DEFENSE DAY

After several years of work, the graduate student has turned in her PhD thesis, and it has been reviewed by her faculty members.

One of them is an expert in the field of structuralism as a philosophy, and as a critical method. What did this professor like most about the thesis, and what were his biggest concerns?

ChatGPT

As a faculty member specialized in structuralism, the professor would be particularly attentive to how the thesis applied systematic methods and structures to interpret and analyze literary texts.

What the Professor Liked Most:

The professor appreciated the systematic approach the student took in examining the influences of Dickens on Twain. The structural breakdown of explicit influences, allusions, shared themes, techniques, and social commentary allowed for comprehensive and detailed analysis.

The faculty member also commended the student's use of structuralist techniques to identify common patterns and motifs in Dickens' and Twain's works. This method helped to reveal underlying structures that could signify Dickens' influence on Twain.

Finally, the way the student used structuralism to analyze the narratives, themes, and character archetypes was appreciated. This allowed the student to demonstrate how Dickens' and Twain's works might fit into broader structures in literature and society, going beyond a simple comparison of their works.

Biggest Concerns:

One concern the professor had was whether the structuralist approach might have limited the scope of the analysis. While structuralism is powerful for revealing underlying patterns and structures, it can sometimes overlook individual nuances and the historical and cultural contexts that shaped each author's works.

The professor also questioned whether the thesis sufficiently addressed potential counterarguments. For example, how can we discern direct influences from common societal influences or independent development of similar themes and styles?

Lastly, the professor would be interested in how the thesis could be expanded using post-structuralist theory, which might challenge some of the assumptions of structuralism and provide an even more nuanced view of Dickens' influence on Twain.

Overall, the professor was appreciative of the depth and systematic nature of the analysis, while also suggesting areas where the thesis could be further enriched and nuanced.

Can you elaborate via some examples of how poststructuralist theory would lead in different directions, than structuralism per se? Be sure you show what the differences between the structuralist and poststructuralist approaches for, to assist the general reader grasp your answer.

ChatGPT

Absolutely. **Structuralism and post-structuralism** are both intellectual movements, but they approach analysis from different perspectives.

Structuralism, which emerged in the mid-20th century, focuses on identifying and analyzing the underlying structures that govern the way we think, communicate, and perceive the world. It assumes that the meaning of a text (or any cultural artifact) lies not in the individual elements but in the structure they form, and it tends to see phenomena as parts of a larger, coherent system.

On the other hand, **post-structuralism**, which arose in response to structuralism, questions the idea of fixed structures determining our understanding of the world. Post-structuralists argue that

meanings are not fixed or stable, but rather are subject to interpretation and can change over time. They emphasize the role of power, context, and reader interpretation in shaping meaning.

Now, let's consider how a post-structuralist approach might differ in analyzing **the thesis on Dickens' influence on Twain**:

1. Deconstructing Fixed Meanings:

Post-structuralists would likely challenge the idea of fixed themes or stylistic elements that can be definitively attributed to Dickens' influence. They might argue that these elements are open to multiple interpretations and that their meaning can change based on different cultural or historical contexts.

2. Power Structures and Biases:

A post-structuralist analysis would also look at how power structures and biases might affect our interpretation of both authors' works. For example, it might question whose perspective is prioritized in determining what constitutes "influence" and whether different interpretations might emerge from different perspectives.

3. The Role of the Reader:

Post-structuralism places great emphasis on the role of the reader in creating meaning. In the context of this thesis, a post-structuralist might argue that what we perceive as Dickens' influence on Twain might instead reflect our own interpretations and cultural biases.

4. Questioning Binary Oppositions:

Post-structuralists **often challenge binary oppositions**. If the thesis positions Dickens as the influencer and Twain as the influenced, a post-structuralist might question this binary, exploring how Twain might have influenced Dickens' posthumous reputation or how they both might have been influenced by broader cultural trends.

In sum, a post-structuralist approach would add a layer of complexity to the thesis by questioning the stability of meanings, exploring power structures and biases, emphasizing the role of the reader, and challenging the binary opposition of influencer and influenced.

THE FIRST JOB INTERVIEW: AT ANOTHER COLLEGE

The student has passed her PhD and is now giving job talks for tenure track faculty positions. Give us the outline for a good job talk for her.

Pay particular attention to the booby trap that her next plans ought NOT be simply a deeper dive into the exact material of her PhD thesis. Rather, she should be building on her skill set and moving her vision forward.

ChatGPT

Certainly! Here's an outline for the job talk that highlights her previous work while also showcasing her ability to expand her research beyond her PhD thesis:

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Brief personal introduction and academic background

Summary of her PhD research's major findings

Explanation of why this research is significant to the broader field of literature and culture studies

II. Deep Dive into PhD Research (15 minutes)

Presentation of her research question: the influence of Charles Dickens on Mark Twain

Explanation of her methodological approach (structuralist analysis, comparative study)

Key findings and their significance

Discussion of the feedback she received during her viva, especially the critique from a structuralist perspective, and how she addressed these points in her final thesis

III. Post-PhD Research Development (10 minutes)

Explanation of how her PhD research led to her post-doctoral research interest: studying the influence among authors within a broader literary network

Discussion of how she plans to build on her skills, such as using structuralist methods to analyze literary influences and extending these methods to a larger scale

Description of a preliminary project she's started on this topic

IV. Future Research and Contribution to the Department (10 minutes)

Outline of her **future research plans**, perhaps involving a comparative study of **different authors from the same period**, expanding on the theme of literary influence

Discussion on how she plans to **apply post-structuralist theory** in her future research, to address the limitations in her PhD work

Explanation of how her research will **contribute to the department**, perhaps through **interdisciplinary** collaboration or by filling a **gap** in the department's research portfolio

V. Teaching Philosophy and Courses (10 minutes)

Overview of her teaching philosophy and style

Ideas for courses she could teach, drawing from her research expertise

Explanation of how her teaching and research will mutually inform each other

VI. Conclusion and Q&A (10 minutes)

- Recap of the key points from the talk
- Emphasis on her excitement and readiness to contribute to the department
- Open the floor for questions from the audience

This job talk not only covers the breadth and depth of her PhD research but also showcases her ability to grow and adapt as a researcher. By demonstrating her eagerness to embrace new theories (such as post-structuralism) and expand her research scope, she shows potential employers that she has the vision and adaptability needed for a tenure-track position.

QUESTIONS DURING JOB TALK

The first question is from the chairperson of the department that might hire her. She would like more detail from the candidate regarding Point 4, her next research plans. The chairperson immediately acknowledges the candidate won't know the exact plans, as she just finished her PhD thesis weeks ago.

However, could you give some examples of her future research plans? For example, if the candidate wanted to apply her method to a different author pair who might that be?

ChatGPT

Absolutely. Here's a more detailed response to the chairperson's question about the candidate's future research plans:

Future Research Directions:

Building on the structuralist methods she utilized in her PhD work, she plans to extend her research to studying the interplay of influences within a broader literary network. She is interested in how literary influence propagates within this network, not just between a pair of authors.

To start with, she's considering examining the influence between **F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway**, two iconic American authors who were contemporaries and known to have a complex friendship and rivalry. Both authors produced works that captured the spirit of their time, and a study of the influences between them could shed light on how their individual styles evolved in the context of their relationship.

Another potential area of interest is the influence of European authors, such as **Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky**, on American authors like **William Faulkner**. This could involve studying how Faulkner's narrative techniques and themes were shaped by his reading of Russian literature.

In addition, she is interested in developing and applying a **mixed-method approach that combines structuralist and post-structuralist analysis**. This would allow her to continue examining underlying literary structures while also incorporating a more nuanced understanding of how cultural and historical context, reader interpretation, and power structures shape literary influence.

While these are preliminary ideas, she is excited about the prospect of refining and expanding upon them in collaboration with colleagues in her new department. By pursuing these directions, she hopes to contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how literary influence shapes and is shaped by broader literary and cultural networks.

A tenured professor, who is not the chairperson speaks up.

Could the candidate apply her method to a pair of living authors, or a pair where at least one author is living? That is, she could take a structuralist approach to the influence of A and B, and after she has laid that out, she could actually interview B for corroboration.

As you develop your answer, consider that the candidate's answer could be in the affirmative, in the negative, or in some combination.

ChatGPT

Absolutely. Let's consider each possibility:

1. Affirmative Approach:

The candidate affirms that she could apply her structuralist approach to **living authors**. For instance, she could examine the influence of Margaret Atwood on a younger author like Sally Rooney. After conducting a structuralist analysis of their works, she could indeed interview Rooney to gain insight into whether and how she was influenced by Atwood, adding an exciting layer of direct authorial insight to her study.

2. Negative Approach:

However, she also recognizes **potential challenges** with this approach. Authors might not be consciously aware of all the influences on their work, or they might be hesitant to attribute their creative output to the influence of others. Furthermore, it may be too early to fully grasp the influence of a living author, as their body of work and its impact are still unfolding. So while this could yield interesting findings, it might also complicate the analysis.

3. Combination Approach:

A combination approach could involve an **initial structuralist analysis of the authors' works**, followed by **an interview** to provide context and supplement the findings. However, she would stress that the interview would be just one part of a multi-faceted approach. The actual influence would still primarily be determined through a careful analysis of the texts, while the interview could provide additional insights and help interpret the findings.

Overall, she's open to the innovative idea of including **living authors** in her analysis, recognizing that it would both expand the potential scope of her research and introduce new challenges to address. The chance to corroborate findings with direct input from an author is an exciting prospect that could deepen her understanding of how influence operates in literary networks.

A junior professor now has the chance to ask a question.

This junior professor has a joint appointment in the English department and the artificial intelligence department. He wonders if there are ways where AI analysis could enhance the insights or the validity or both of this type of work.

Consider the possibility that the candidate finds this interesting, or that she is appalled.

ChatGPT

Sure, let's consider both possibilities:

1. The Candidate Finds It Interesting:

The candidate expresses her interest in the potential of AI to enhance literary analysis. She acknowledges that AI could help identify patterns and connections that might be overlooked in a traditional analysis. For example, machine learning algorithms could be used to analyze large corpora of texts from multiple authors to identify recurring themes, stylistic similarities, and shifts in tone or vocabulary that might signify influence.

Furthermore, **natural language processing (NLP)** could be used to perform sentiment analysis or track the evolution of specific themes across different works. AI could also be helpful in analyzing reader responses on a large scale, which might reveal interesting insights about how literary influence is perceived by the public.

However, she would also note the importance of maintaining a critical perspective when using AI, considering potential biases in the algorithms and ensuring that the results are interpreted within the appropriate cultural and historical context.

2. The Candidate Is Appalled:

Alternatively, the candidate might express reservations about the use of AI in literary analysis. She could argue that AI, while excellent at identifying patterns and trends, might lack the nuance and context sensitivity required in literary studies. Literature is deeply tied to human emotions, experiences, and culture – aspects that might be challenging for an AI to fully grasp.

She might also express concern about the potential for AI to oversimplify or misinterpret complex literary phenomena, or to introduce biases that could skew the analysis. Furthermore, she might feel that the use of AI could depersonalize the study of literature, turning it into a quantitative, rather than qualitative, pursuit.

In either case, her response could prompt a deeper discussion about **the role of technology in humanities research**, and how she, as a potential new member of the department, could contribute to these ongoing debates.

Finally, one of the oldest members of the department has been struggling to pay attention.

He is confused and believes the abbreviation NLP refers to neurolinguistic programming rather than to natural language processing. He has always been a fan of neurolinguistic programming, which was in vogue when he was in mid-career. Show how the candidate can deal gracefully and politely with this bizarre misunderstanding and defuse the situation without making the elderly faculty member look senile

ChatGPT

Of course, the candidate would want to handle this situation with respect and tact. Here's how she might respond:

"I appreciate your interest, Professor. It seems there might be a **bit of confusion** about the acronym 'NLP.' In the context of artificial intelligence, 'NLP' typically refers to 'Natural Language Processing,' which involves the application of computational techniques to the analysis and synthesis of natural language and speech.

However, I understand how this could be mixed up with 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming,' which, as you've rightly pointed out, is a fascinating approach to communication and personal development that was indeed quite popular a few years ago.

While these two share an acronym, they're quite different in their applications. The former, Natural Language Processing, is what we could consider for identifying patterns and themes in large literary datasets, while Neuro-Linguistic Programming involves techniques related to understanding human behavior and thought processes. It's intriguing how one acronym can have such diverse implications in different fields, isn't it?

Thank you for bringing this up. It emphasizes the importance of clear communication, especially when it comes to the usage of acronyms in interdisciplinary discussions. I hope this clarification helps."

This response acknowledges the professor's point without dismissing it, while also gently correcting the misunderstanding. The emphasis on the importance of clear communication also turns the moment into a valuable learning opportunity.

A good way to phrase the answer. The seminar is concluded, and the new hire committee and the candidate go out to dinner. That's wish her luck.

ChatGPT

Absolutely, I wish her all the best! Interviews for academic positions can be challenging, but it sounds like she's well-prepared and has valuable insights to bring to the field. Here's to a successful dinner and hopefully, a positive outcome!

BONUS QUESTION:

THE NEW PROFESSOR ALREADY FACES SOME

DEPARTMENTAL POLITICS

Bonus question. The job candidate has been offered a position. She plans to take it.

The assistant professor with a co-appointment at the artificial intelligence department, reaches out to her and would like to propose they collaborate heavily and closely on applying AI to literary criticism such as her topic.

In preparing to answer and giving the new assistant professor a plan, don't assume too fast that this is either a great idea or a terrible idea. Assume that the question raises some legitimate dilemmas that need to be thought through on the part of the new faculty member.

What should the new faculty member be thinking about? Is there anyone she should check for advice? For example, she might want to think about:

- #1 Developing alliances with currently senior and powerful faculty members, rather than with another newcomer, who only has a co-appointment in the English department.
- #2 On the other hand, dramatic new blue-sky interdisciplinary efforts could be powerful, successful, and catapult her to fame. (E.g. the 50-foot basketball shot).

ChatGPT

When considering this proposal, there are several factors the new assistant professor needs to think about:

1. Career Goals and Interests:

The new assistant professor should assess how closely this proposed collaboration aligns with her own research interests and career goals. Would she be venturing too far from her area of expertise, or would this be an exciting opportunity to broaden her skills and knowledge? Would collaborating on this project help her establish herself as an expert in her field, or might it dilute her focus?

2. Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are potential benefits and risks associated with such a collaboration. On the one hand, as you mentioned, this could be a chance to make a significant impact in an innovative, interdisciplinary area of research, which could greatly boost her academic reputation. On the other hand, it might also be a risky venture, especially if the project fails to produce meaningful results or if it isn't well-received by her peers in the English department.

3. Current Power Dynamics:

It's important for her to consider the power dynamics within the department. As a newcomer, she might indeed want to prioritize establishing relationships with senior faculty members, who could provide valuable mentorship and support. While collaborating with the assistant professor from the AI department might be intellectually rewarding, she would need to consider whether it's the best strategic move at this early stage of her career.

4. Department Culture and Expectations:

She should also get a sense of the department culture and expectations. Would this type of interdisciplinary work be valued and supported by the department? How might it affect her prospects for tenure and promotion?

In terms of seeking advice, she might want to speak with a trusted mentor (#1) from her PhD program, or (#2) a senior faculty member in the new English department, or even (#3) a mentor from an outside institution who can provide an unbiased perspective.

She could also consider reaching out to other academics who have experience and have engaged in similar interdisciplinary collaborations to get a sense of their experiences.

Lastly, she could **negotiate the terms** of the collaboration to ensure that it is mutually beneficial. This might involve agreeing on a timeline, dividing responsibilities, and establishing a plan for publication.

In sum, while the prospect of an interdisciplinary collaboration is **exciting**, it's essential that she **carefully** considers these aspects before making a decision.

**Good answer to a multi faceted dilemma with uncertain risk and benefit decision trees.
Could formal decision analysis or real options theory benefit our protagonist?**

[Note, these are MBA school questions!]

ChatGPT

Certainly, formal decision analysis could help the new assistant professor weigh the potential outcomes of this collaboration against her career goals and the risks involved. Here's how she might use these methods:

1. Decision Analysis:

Decision analysis involves creating a decision tree that maps out each possible decision, the uncertainties associated with it, and its potential outcomes. It's a systematic approach that allows for the comparison of different paths based on their expected utilities. In this case, as she takes a new faculty position, she might create a decision tree that includes the potential benefits (e.g., groundbreaking research, academic recognition) and risks (e.g., project failure, lack of support from the department) associated with the collaboration. She could assign probabilities to each outcome based on her own judgment and any relevant data she might have.

2. Real Options Theory:

The real options approach could also be beneficial to the new English professor. This approach is often used in business to assess the value of an opportunity that might be developed further in the future. The new assistant professor could treat the proposed collaboration as a "real option" that has the potential to yield significant benefits if certain conditions are met (e.g., successful integration of AI into literary analysis, acceptance and support from the department). However, this approach would require her to make assumptions about future outcomes, which could be challenging given the uncertainties involved.

In both methods, it's important for the new assistant professor to consider both the tangible and intangible aspects of her decision. For instance, while academic recognition and career advancement are tangible benefits, the intellectual satisfaction and potential for personal growth are intangible benefits that should also be considered.

It's also important to remember that while these formal methods can provide valuable insights, they are just one tool in the decision-making process. The new assistant professor will also need to rely on her own judgment, intuition, and advice from trusted mentors.

She's heard of the Benjamin Franklin method with two columns.

ChatGPT

Ah, the **Benjamin Franklin method**, also known as the pros-and-cons list, is indeed a simple but powerful tool for decision making. Here's how it works:

Identify the decision to be made: In this case, the decision is whether to engage in the proposed collaboration with the assistant professor in the AI department.

Draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper: On one side, label it 'Pros' and on the other side, 'Cons'.

List the pros and cons: Under each heading, list out all of the advantages and disadvantages that come to mind in relation to the decision. For the 'Pros' column, she might include things like opportunity for interdisciplinary research, potential for innovation and fame, and learning new skills. In the 'Cons' column, she might list risks like diluting her focus, potential project failure, or lack of support from senior faculty.

Weigh the pros and cons: Once she's listed all the pros and cons, she can reflect on them to see if one side heavily outweighs the other. This isn't strictly a numbers game — one very significant pro or con can outweigh several minor ones.

Reflect and decide: After weighing the pros and cons, she should give herself some time to think over the decision. Intuition and gut feelings can also play an important role in decision making.

One significant benefit of the Benjamin Franklin method is its simplicity and flexibility. It doesn't require any specialized knowledge or technical skills, and it can be used for a wide range of decisions. However, it's still a subjective method and relies heavily on the individual's personal judgment and perspective.

A VIDEO SCRIPT SUMMARIZING THIS PROJECT

Now let's turn to a different task. I called the process we've engaged in, "guided creation." The AI partner has done 95% of the writing. However, the human partner is guiding the direction of the analysis and substantially contributed to what the work product looks like. This is crucial, even though the words of the human might be only 5% of the process.

Write an approximately two minute video script, introducing the idea of guided creation in this sense, and then using the PhD development and the job talk as an example of the use of guided creation as a method for the human and the AI to be working together.

Ideally, this would be two minutes, however, you have the option of going up to a three minute script note that this example with a PhD thesis and a job interview provide familiar touchstones for the viewer of the video, well, here she is learning entirely new concepts about guided creation for interacting with an AI LLM.

[First draft of script here. Instead, see the similar but expanded second draft below.]

OK, thank you for the above script [redacted for brevity]. I might use that as it is.

Do you think it is possible to use some examples from the job interview to make the process more concrete? Essentially, what we were doing from the time we started talking about the job interview was hypothetically wargaming certain events that might, or might not happen, and how she would respond. This is a method of preparation for a future scenario where you'll have to respond in real time.

Bringing in one or two concrete examples (as written above) into the video script, might help a bell go off in the mind of the viewer, since it makes the use of AI concrete.

ChatGPT

Absolutely, here's a revision with more specific examples included from the job talk scenario:

[Opening scene: Screen splits with a futuristic AI graphic on one side and a human figure on the other. Title: "Guided Creation: Collaborative Brilliance"]

Narrator (Voiceover): "In the AI world, the synergy between humans and machines takes many forms. Today, we present Guided Creation - a concept encapsulating this unique collaboration."

[Cut to a graphic depicting a human figure leading an AI along a winding path]

Narrator (Voiceover): "Guided Creation is an approach where humans set the strategic direction, while the AI provides detailed content. A symbiotic process for achieving common goals."

[Transition to an animation of a PhD candidate preparing for a job talk]

Narrator (Voiceover): "Imagine a doctoral student prepping for a job talk, a critical step in her academic journey. She decides the main points of her presentation and the AI, an advanced language model, drafts the talk based on her input."

[Show graphics of potential questions and answers generated by the AI]

Narrator (Voiceover): "In this hypothetical scenario, **she anticipates questions from her potential colleagues.**

For instance, could she apply her method to a pair of **living authors**? Or, how might **AI analysis** enhance her work? With Guided Creation, the AI can help her prepare thoughtful and articulate responses."

[Transition to a slide of a challenging question from an elderly professor]

Narrator (Voiceover): "**When faced with a bizarre misunderstanding about an acronym** during the job talk, the AI can help her navigate the situation gracefully. It can suggest polite and informative ways to clarify the confusion without causing embarrassment."

[Cut back to the split screen of the human and AI figure]

Narrator (Voiceover): "**These examples** demonstrate the power of Guided Creation. The AI does the heavy lifting in drafting and suggesting, but the human is the one driving the process and making the final decisions."

[Final scene: The AI and human figure merge, symbolizing the harmonious collaboration]

Narrator (Voiceover): "In this era of AI advancement, it's not about who writes more or who does less. It's about the human and the AI learning from each other, working together, creating together."

[Screen fades to black with text: "Guided Creation: Collaborative Brilliance"]

Narrator (Voiceover): "Welcome to the era of Guided Creation. The future of collaborative brilliance."

[End of video]

Thank you. With an average speaking speed, what do you think the run time is?

ChatGPT

A general guideline is that an average person speaks at about 130 to 150 words per minute. Considering the revised script contains roughly 370 words, it would result in approximately **a 2.5 minute run time** at a relaxed pace. This timing can of course vary depending on the speaker's natural pace and any pauses for dramatic effect or for visuals to sink in during the video.

This project, meaning this document, is 6500 words, with a reading time of about 30 minutes. The AI summary (opening) is 200 words, with a reading time of 1 minute.