

# Exploring Strategies for using AI in Writing Classrooms

## Why is Understanding AI Use Important?

Currently, little consensus exists about using AI technology as part of a writing classroom. There is a learning curve for AI, and expertise in this context is problematic because tech is constantly changing. Questions of how AI may best be used especially when we consider the implications of the ethics, law, accessibility, impact, and authorship issues surround its use. Studies are being conducted, yet questions persist: Should AI be used, and if so, how can AI help in the teaching or tutoring of writing?

Some recommendations are beginning to emerge on the use of AI in classrooms, and they have been found to be useful. In fact, according to a First-Year Composition course study conducted by Lisa Rourke from Brandeis University, she found that

- Many students are skeptical and scared of AI, and they care about protecting their voice and intellectual integrity.
- Students were worried about AI taking away their creativity, voice, and identity.
- Students are conflicted about AI, and they want better education on the ethical use of AI and clear guidelines on its application with academic work.
- AI is most helpful in early stages of writing.
- Students are looking to faculty for guidance on how to use AI.
- AI not helpful in getting feedback.
- AI most useful as a Title generator, getting key words.

## 4 Ways to explore the use of AI.

- AI may be used as a **brainstorming tool**
  - Following a lecture on using AI for brainstorming, instructors work side by side with students during the guided work.

- Grammar instruction
  - For individualized instruction, instructors may provide students guided practice for grammar instruction that helps explain difficult issues in an understandable way.
  - Students may run their papers through an AI source to frame an individualized lesson on grammar instruction by asking “What are the strengths and weaknesses of this paper concerning X, Y, OR Z?”
- Explaining Genre:
  - Working with the instructor, the student may ask an AI source, “what does a movie review, sestina, lab report look like?”
    - Once the student sees what a movie review, sestina, or lab report looks like, and they see what it does, the instructor can engage the student in a conversation about next steps the student can take to complete the assignment without any further AI assistance.
      - Lesson: Since this is only a query to help the student gain some clarity, they should be instructed to avoid going further and asking for a completed paper because the “support” a generated paper provides cannot be verified. That, then, leads instruction toward helping and enabling students to write the paper through conducting their own research.
- AI can introduce students to new key words for research. Then, once the lesson takes a turn toward research, the student may begin to engage in the writing process.
  - Working with the instructor, the student may ask an AI source, “what are some key words regarding X?”
    - Lesson: It should be stressed, that the AI should only be used to illustrate an example of how to write a report, sestina, etc. Students should be discouraged from using AI as a place where they can get a paper generated. If they are instructed to use AI as a way to generate a paper, it should be stressed that they are not to turn in these assignments. They are only to be used as examples.

# Moving Forward with AI.

Once students learn how to use AI, they may then begin to use AI ethically and responsibly, thus, responding to Rourke's findings. It should be stressed that AI can create a jumping off point, not an end point. Nonetheless, there may need to be some policies in place. Moving forward with AI means:

- Having a clear AI policy. Guidelines for using AI should be clearly articulated by the instructor.
- Students may be encouraged to use AI; however, they should understand that an oral exam may be administered at the end of the semester to illustrate students clearly understand what they write about.
- AI generated content needs to be verified, and AI generated content needs to be referenced, thus, it requires a reference entry.
- Students should be taught how to write an AI prompt.
- Scaffold large assignments to prevent cheating on AI.
- Laboratory Instruction is a reliable way to monitor student work and their use of AI.

## Works Cited

Lisa Rourke. "How does AI impact student and instructor experiences."

*Conference on Instruction and Technology*, Buffalo University, April 2024.