

**When You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take It,
and the Future Ain't What It Used to Be:
Lessons in Living with ChatGPT**

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Abstract

This paper addresses the pedagogical implications of incorporating ChatGPT into the college English classroom specifically and, more broadly, into any college course with a focus on writing and research. Historically, advances in technology in the college classroom have characteristically promoted two juxtaposed reactions: relief and anxiety. Students customarily exhibit relief that a new technology will lessen their workload and embrace it wholeheartedly. Conversely, faculty often experience anxiety at how some newfangled computerized application will impact student learning. This juxtaposition creates barriers to an effective integration of new technology into the classroom. What students view as a cool new tool faculty see as a platform that promotes student slacking or, at worst, cheating. Such is the case with ChatGPT. I review generally the ethics of using ChatGPT as a classroom tool to conclude that the potential for advancing educational equity among students outweighs any potential for misuse of this quickly evolving technology. Relying upon established principles of classroom instruction as well as significant trial-and-error experience, I propose a pedagogical framework that allows for limited application of ChatGPT in selected scaffolded assignments. I further offer specific lesson plans to show how incorporation of ChatGPT into the college composition classroom can align with universally accepted goals, objectives, and student learning targets in both freshman composition and traditional literature courses, all while removing barriers and promoting equity. This paper provides faculty who are not already well-versed in ChatGPT with information to evaluate its efficacy for their courses and a flexible framework to include into their pedagogy easily modifiable ChatGPT-based lesson plans that present challenging yet fun scaffolded assignments for any writing or research curriculum.

Keywords: ChatGPT; AI; artificial intelligence; pedagogy; lesson plans; ethics; equity; freshman composition; higher education

“You Can Observe a Lot by Watching”: Looking at ChatGPT

Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically the rise of ChatGPT, changes the ball game in academia. Some professorial pundits—like an irate manager racing from the dugout to confront the home plate umpire—argue it’s an unfairly called balk, advancing the runners to bases they don’t deserve because they didn’t hit the fastball thrown to them. Yogi Berra, the Hall of Fame catcher for the New York Yankees, espoused a few “Yogi-isms” that aptly define this new ChatGPT era. Berra once opined, “You can observe a lot by watching.”¹ Indeed, even a surface-level look at the debates on college campuses and in higher education journals about ChatGPT provides a plethora of opinions both pro and con. When inviting former Major Leaguer and childhood friend Joe Garagiola and his wife to dinner, Berra gave the following directions to his house: “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” While such directions at first blush seem incongruous, they actually were correct, since the road circled in either direction back to the Berra home. In another famous quip, Berra prognosticated: “The future ain’t what it used to be.” These Yogi-isms sum up the future of higher education. AI and ChatGPT are here to stay. They are gamechangers. The future is now, and it is decidedly not what academia envisioned only a scant few semesters ago. Like Yogi Berra’s infamous directions, all future paths lead back to ChatGPT. This stark realization leads me, as a college English teacher, to examine ChatGPT as an important pedagogical tool rather than as a wholly destructive mechanism to student writing and critical thinking skills. This essay does not purport to research ChatGPT as an AI platform nor to pontificate in an overly academic way about the efficacies of AI in the classroom. Instead, I offer selected lesson plans along with some personal ruminations on the ethics of using ChatGPT in the classroom and my success in building ChatGPT-oriented assignments into my pedagogy despite my initial reluctance to embrace a new technology that appears, at least to the uninitiated, to provide students a way to shortcut the intended rigor of the course. Playing ball in the quickly evolving 21st century college classroom—and, most importantly, developing a winning strategy as the course manager—requires putting ChatGPT into the lineup. Failing to take advantage of ChatGPT’s potential as a star player with untapped talent and a long future career may result not only in a lost ballgame but also in an entire season of missed opportunities.

¹ For explanations of these “Yogi-isms” and more, see <https://yogiberramuseum.org/about-yogi/yogisms/>.

The Pre-Game Analysis: What is ChatGPT and What Position Does It Play?

English Studies, like most academic disciplines, consists of a plethora of subdisciplines. Teachers in each subdiscipline may elect to treat ChatGPT differently consistent with their course objectives and student learning targets. For example, ChatGPT proves quite useful in creating basic templates in technical writing courses for routine assignments such as the job application cover letter. Engaging ChatGPT to provide a first draft allows course instruction to focus more heavily on the personalization of the cover letter. In this manner, ChatGPT permits a deeper dive into what constitutes an effective cover letter rather than spending one or two valuable classroom days on a basic draft. However, undergraduate technical writing courses—customarily 300-level offerings populated primarily with non-English majors—operate in a completely different pedagogical sphere than freshman composition courses or literature courses. In these two bread-and-butter college English Department curricula, the dangers and promises of ChatGPT become most evident.

Akgun and Greenhow (2022) and Hwang and Chen (2023) analyze AI as a paradigm shifter in the American and international education systems. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standards Association (IEEE-SA) defines AI as “[a] combination of cognitive automation, machine learning, reasoning, hypothesis generation and analysis, natural language processing, and intentional algorithm mutation [that is intended to produce] insights and analytics at or above human capability” (Akgun and Greenhow, 2022, p. 432). ChatGPT—an acronym for Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer—is an AI application developed by OpenAI and launched in late 2022 (with a paid version launched in early 2023) that generates human-like textual responses to a single prompt or series of prompts input by the user.² Essentially a sophisticated conversational language bot that both learns and predicts via its algorithm, ChatGPT allows the user to customize the prompt to include a myriad of parameters. For example, the user may request that ChatGPT write a Shakespearian sonnet about unrequited love between a man and the Siri-voice on his cellphone, a short story with four characters set in a rural Mississippi gas station, a business solicitation letter to sell widgets to Wal-Mart, or even a research essay of specified word length, format and style, and number of sources. In computer science terms, ChatGPT is a Large Language Model (LLM), which means in the simplest sense that it scrubs the internet for massive data sets of available information to formulate a response to the prompt within parameters specified by the user. Literally “playing” with ChatGPT a few times via the OpenAI

² See: <https://openai.com/> for Open AI’s features, including the free and paid ChatGPT platforms.

website portal provides a solid operational knowledge of the platform, its capabilities, and its limitations.

The Rules of the Game: Ethics and ChatGPT

It is beyond the scope of this article to offer detailed university or departmental policy suggestions regarding ChatGPT use by students. Since significant debate exists over whether the ubiquitous university academic dishonesty policies and/or plagiarism statements customarily found in syllabi are sufficient to encompass ChatGPT use by students, the broader philosophical and procedural questions underlying those issues are best addressed separate from the pedagogical usefulness of ChatGPT. Instead of substantively analyzing the Ivory Tower ethics of whether ChatGPT should be used at all, or under what university/department/course limitations ChatGPT usage should be permitted, my focus rests on how using ChatGPT in the college English classroom, particularly in freshman composition and undergraduate literature courses, can improve student learning outcomes. Nonetheless, a faculty member considering ChatGPT use in the classroom should consider the basic ethics underlying AI in educational environments to determine whether ChatGPT use fits within the course pedagogical expectations and the faculty member's personal comfort zone. Hence, a brief exploration—as opposed to a deep dive—of the ethics of ChatGPT is indicated here. That exploration begins with how faculty approach ChatGPT: as enemy or friend.

With ChatGPT still in its infancy in terms of what it can do, many academics view ChatGPT with a hefty degree of skepticism despite its frequency of use growing daily on campuses nationwide. This presupposes ChatGPT as a pedagogical Other. While applying the concept of the Other from Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of relational ethics to the professor-ChatGPT interaction may seem a stretch, the ethical foundation of what Levinas suggests by Othering—or what he called alterity—is not. For Levinas, what underscores a face-to-face encounter with the Other is an understanding of difference and the establishment of a level of ethical responsibility to someone (or something) that does not look (or act) like us. So instead of looking upon the Other as a mirror to define ourselves (and thus our pedagogy) by seeing only differences, Levinas encourages us to embrace difference as a modality for acceptance and understanding. This ethical notion underpins the use of any new classroom technology, especially one like ChatGPT, because any AI-based platform presupposes a human-like interaction. Therefore, when staring ChatGPT in the face, faculty should not merely reject it as the Other, something so different from traditional

classroom writing that it simply cannot be permitted to exist. ChatGPT does not present an existential threat to critical thinking nor to student writing success. Instead, incorporating ChatGPT into classroom pedagogy can embrace the Other in a way that promotes deeper thinking and better writing.

The ethics of ChatGPT in the classroom is increasingly the subject of recent literature in higher education pedagogy and now even has a journal devoted solely to it, *AI & Ethics*.³ Rane et al. (2023) provide the most comprehensive analysis of ChatGPT “pros” and “cons” in academia. They list ten specific reasons that ChatGPT cannot serve as an “author” for any academic work and follow that up with thirteen specific reasons why ChatGPT poses ethical and legal problems for users (Rane et al., 2023, pp. 855–62). Despite this litany of negativity about potential ChatGPT use and abuse, Rane et al. still offer this affirmation about ChatGPT as a tool for educational equity:

While the challenges and limitations of ChatGPT in education are evident, there are also numerous opportunities for innovation. Generative AI can enable the development of adaptive learning platforms that tailor educational content to individual students’ needs and abilities. This personalization can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. (Rane et al., 2023, p. 854)

ChatGPT can serve as an important ethical instrument to level the playing field, particularly for students who are non-native English speakers or who have disability accommodations. Further, professorial collaboration with ChatGPT offers potential significant pedagogical advantages to all students:

Instead of replacing human input, these technologies should be regarded as tools that can augment and streamline educational tasks. Educators and researchers can work alongside ChatGPT, emphasizing its responsible and ethical use. In this collaborative framework, educators play a pivotal role in guiding students on how to use ChatGPT responsibly. They can stress the importance of critical thinking, fact-checking, and proper attribution, ensuring that students view ChatGPT as a supplement to their learning rather than a substitute for their own intellectual efforts. (Rane et al., 2023, p. 854)

The prevailing literature addressing the ethical issues raised by ChatGPT suggests that several measures already in place in most academic environments mitigate the most serious ethical

³ For a review of current and past issues, see: <https://link.springer.com/journal/43681>.

concerns related to generative AI use: transparency and attribution of source. In other words, using ChatGPT responsibly involves admitting to its use in the academic process and providing citation to it when necessary. Even the Modern Language Association (MLA) has now provided a citation format for ChatGPT or AI-generated information in a formal essay.⁴

Many of the ethical concerns related to ChatGPT appear to center upon the intersection of university policies, educational equity instead of disparity (because of technological unavailability), and its proper use as a supplemental writing tool rather than a stand-alone method of text creation. As a bottom line, faculty must consider establishing an ethical use framework for ChatGPT and providing a clear and unequivocal statement about such in the course syllabus. Quite frankly, this ethical analysis should occur whether ChatGPT use will be part of the course pedagogy or not, especially since students will undoubtedly use ChatGPT anyway in some form or fashion.

Playing the Game with ChatGPT in the Lineup

Permitting writing by anyone (or anything) other than the student for a formative or certainly a summative assessment in a freshman composition classroom appears antithetical to foundational course objectives. I wholeheartedly agree with this basic tenet. My published course goal for all freshman composition and undergraduate literature courses I teach is simple: students will become critical readers, thinkers, and writers. For ChatGPT to take a primary role in two of those three necessary components of student success suggests ceding old fashioned teaching and learning for a newfangled and downright scary version of classroom fake news. However, incorporating ChatGPT into the freshman composition curriculum to buttress the students' independent critical thinking and critical writing skills not only facilitates an improved student work product but also serves to create a fun and challenging series of assignments. Furthermore, a clear demonstration to students that the professor understands the nuances of AI operates as a not-so-subtle deterrent to subsequent inappropriate or impermissible ChatGPT use in the course as defined in the syllabus or by applicable university policy. In other words, bringing ChatGPT to bear on selected assignments allows the sage on the stage to show students that the professor knows

⁴ See: <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>.

more than they do, thus diminishing in student minds the possibility of using this new technology to “outsmart” the teacher.

Creating scaffolded assignments that incorporate ChatGPT—without permitting ChatGPT to do the “real” work that underlies the student learning targets—can be an obstacle. What follows are two separate lesson plans incorporating ChatGPT that I have successfully integrated into my courses, with occasional variations to accommodate the subject matter at issue. Once I discovered just how widespread ChatGPT use by students was becoming, I was faced with an unenviable choice: either ban its use outright and play policeman or ride the wave of this new technology with an eye toward improving student learning outcomes as a result. I opted for the “I can’t beat ‘em so I’m going to join ‘em” mentality within certain parameters. Each of the following lesson plans is simple to implement, variable in scope, and easily adaptable to any classroom, not just those in an English course, and may be scaffolded in sequence if desired to increase rigor and provide additional pedagogical reinforcement of lessons learned.

A Lesson Plan Incorporating ChatGPT to Analyze Argumentative Structure

Often even gifted student writers—those with nearly flawless execution of grammar and mechanics—experience difficulty mastering the argumentative essay form. This lesson plan invites ChatGPT into the classroom conversation about how to structure an effective argumentative essay. Student critical thinking both begins and ends this lesson, with ChatGPT merely providing the mid-game fodder for an appropriate feedback loop between student and instructor.

Lesson Objective: Students will reinforce their knowledge of effective argumentative essay structure.

Student Learning Targets: (a) Students will learn to recognize the parts of an argumentative essay, and (b) analyze the effectiveness of an argument through a logical progression of its parts.

Materials Needed: Computer/internet access for each student.

Time Required: 50–75 minutes (time periods suggested below may be expanded or compressed to accommodate the classroom setting).

Activity Description: First, as a bell-ringer, the teacher should ask the students to list what they believe are the component parts of a successful argumentative essay (ideally, this bell-ringer invites students to activate prior knowledge) (5 minutes). Next, the instructor should hold brief classroom discussion with the students and reach a consensus (through instructor-guided

discussion) of what these component parts are (ideally, a version of an introduction with a claim or thesis, reasoning plus evidence in multiple body paragraphs, an analysis of the counterclaim and rebuttal in a *refutatio* section, and a conclusion) based upon the complexity of the intended summative assessment essay (10 minutes). Once the critical parts of the argumentative essay are outlined clearly, the instructor should ask students to type a specific pre-determined prompt into ChatGPT, requesting that ChatGPT prepare an essay of a pre-determined length within pre-determined parameters (the instructor should preview this prompt in advance of class to determine its fitness for the course) (5 minutes). Once ChatGPT provides the essay, the teacher will engage the class through a gradual release method of instruction (I do/we do/you do). First, the instructor, as an “I do,” will analyze the ChatGPT-generated essay for claim (the most obvious and easiest of the critical parts of an argumentative essay to determine), analyzing whether the generated claim is argumentative in nature (that is, takes a position on the issue presented) and whether the resulting thesis statement is clear, concise, and argumentative, as well as properly located as the last sentence of the introductory paragraph (5 minutes). Next, the class as a group will engage in a “we do” analysis of the first body paragraph of the ChatGPT-generated essay, asking the pertinent questions of whether a topic sentence is provided, whether an element of the thesis is adequately addressed, whether the argument is logical and supported with textual evidence and/or scholarship, and whether there is an appropriate transition to the next body paragraph (10 minutes). Thereafter, students will be released to complete the “you do” portion of the assignment by individually critiquing the remainder of the ChatGPT-generated essay, analyzing whether the earlier agreed-upon component parts of the successful argumentative essay format are present, rating the strength of the argument (based upon its internal logic and whether the evidence in support of it is compelling), and offering an assessment of how the ChatGPT-generated essay could be improved from a surface-level look at the issue to a more compelling deep dive in support of the claim (15 minutes). The remainder of the class period (10 minutes) returns the class to a group discussion where students will share their individual findings, culminating in an exit ticket of rating the ChatGPT-generated essay on a scale of 1–10 for argumentative effectiveness. This exit ticket will provide the instructor with a critical and quick formative assessment of what students believe about the quality of ChatGPT-generated work.

A variation on this lesson plan may be used in a traditional literature class and/or to allow group work in the classroom. Instead of asking ChatGPT to generate an argumentative essay, the

instructor (or students at instructor discretion) may input a specific essay prompt based upon a class assigned reading, for example a short story, novel, or poem. Students will be required in this lesson plan variation to evaluate the ChatGPT-generated essay in terms of whether it is a successful and compelling literary analysis or merely a surface-level recitation of plot elements and/or a cursory look at literary devices. Students also may take the ChatGPT-generated essay and dive deeper, for example turning a 500-word ChatGPT essay into a 1000-word essay in a classroom exercise completed in student groups, with each student group receiving or creating its own topic and being challenged to “upgrade” the ChatGPT essay accordingly within the timeframe of a 50- to 75-minute class. I have required that students paste the ChatGPT essay into a shared Google Doc and thereafter assign each group member the responsibility for editing/modifying/adding text in a body paragraph (or removing “bad” or hallucinated text). The group dynamic diminishes fear and permits students to complete the work collaboratively and work faster within the prescribed time limit. This lesson plan variation assists students in mastering the literary analysis essay structure (a common literature class course objective) and reinforces the importance of textual evidence and scholarship to buttress argument, as well as refine knowledge about and encourage a close reading of the specific piece of literature under consideration. For example, in one of my literature courses where this lesson plan variation was used relative to selected short stories by Eudora Welty, ChatGPT misnamed a character, in another misplaced the setting, and in another the analysis was incredibly surface level with incorrect quotes from the story as evidentiary support. Only a close reading of the literature under consideration by the students will catch these types of ChatGPT errors and hallucinations.

Any variation of this lesson plan serves to reinforce essay writing skills, whether the classic argumentative essay or the literary analysis. Through this exercise, students engage in not only spotting the critical elements of an argumentative essay or the literary analysis but also analyzing them for effectiveness. In pre-ChatGPT lesson plans, this type of classroom exercise would focus on a sample essay printed in the course writing text. However, incorporating ChatGPT allows for an entirely new breadth of potential sample essay subject matter and proves equally challenging and definitely more fun from the student perspective than the old “look at the sample in the book” method.

A Lesson Plan Incorporating ChatGPT to Evaluate the Research

“Is this source good?” That question serves as a common refrain in undergraduate classrooms. Many students attempt to rely on Professor Google rather than digging into the online library databases (such as JStor) that universities provide and almost never pull highly caffeinated late-night research sessions in the library stacks. Information on source bias, source quality and credibility, and what constitutes a peer-reviewed research source should precede this lesson. This lesson plan reinforces basic research skills and the importance of quality research as a predicate to strong essay writing, as well as showing how ChatGPT may “hallucinate” and invent research source material or evidence out of thin air, mis-cite sources, or cite sources for the wrong proposition.

Lesson Objectives: (a) Students will reinforce basic online library database research skills, (b) Students will learn how to determine the quality of research sources, and (c) Students will reinforce proper citation formatting skills.

Student Learning Targets: (a) Students will learn to engage in effective research for my classes using JStor or other online academic databases, (b) determine the quality of a research source, (c) determine whether a research source is used appropriately, and (c) determine whether a research source is cited properly in accordance with required MLA/APA/CMS formatting and style.

Materials Needed: (a) Computer/internet access for each student, (b) Student access to online academic databases through a university library.

Time Required: 50 minutes through potential homework exercises (variable depending upon the level of the course and instructor requirements for research in the course).

Activity Description: The instructor may either provide a research essay generated before class by ChatGPT (a controlled method) or ask students to input a prompt into ChatGPT within certain parameters to write a research essay in class on any given topic, on a topic relative to the course, or on a topic(s) pre-determined by the instructor (more open-ended methods). The purpose of this activity is not to evaluate the essay, per se, in terms of structure; rather, students will evaluate the source material buttressing the essay’s argument. In this manner, this lesson plan scaffolds on top of Lesson Plan No. 1, discussed above. A bell-ringer for this lesson involves activating student prior knowledge by asking students to provide individual definitions of what constitutes a quality research source and/or asking students how to cite a research source (both for an in-text

parenthetical citation and for a Works Cited or Bibliographic/References entry). Thereafter, students will review the ChatGPT-generated essay and evaluate the quality of the research therein by answering a series of questions and engaging in a series of “fact-checking” type research activities. The instructor may create questions specifically tailored to the subject matter, but generally those questions would include such topics as:

1. Did ChatGPT “hallucinate” or invent source material? If so, explain how this conclusion was reached. What databases or research compendiums were consulted to conclude that the source material used by ChatGPT actually does not exist? Are there any other clues in the essay or otherwise that suggest the source material was a ChatGPT hallucination?
2. If the source exists, find a copy of the source in an online database. Is it credible and why? What leads to a conclusion of credibility?
3. Read the entirety of the source material cited by ChatGPT. Is the source used consistent with its thesis or is it misused or misconstrued in some manner? How/why? Explain what a proper use of this source would entail.
4. Is the in-text/parenthetical citation in correct format and style for the course (for example, MLA, APA, or CMS)? Is the Works Cited page or required Bibliographic/References entry done correctly (for example, MLA, APA, or CMS)?

Given the number of sources that the ChatGPT prompt requires, the teacher may engage in the gradual release method of instruction. For the first source cited by ChatGPT, the instructor may answer the foregoing questions (“I do”). For the second source cited, the whole class may provide the analysis (“we do”). For third and subsequent sources, the individual student will engage with the entirety of the work (“you do”). Depending upon the number of questions tailored to the assignment and the number of sources in the ChatGPT-generated essay (a controlled number based upon the prompt input), the instructor may complete this assignment within an individual class period and/or assign a portion of the lesson as homework. This lesson provides the benefit of not only reinforcing quality research skills but also emphasizing the importance of correct formatting and style in source documentation based upon the style guide (MLA, APA, or CMS) required for the course.

Based upon the course subject matter, the same ChatGPT-generated essay could be used for both lesson plans outlined above. The first lesson plan focuses on essay structure, internal logic,

and argumentative proof. The second lesson plan focuses on the quality of the research sources and proper research documentation in accordance with the style guide required for the course. By using the same ChatGPT-generated essay for both lesson plans, the instruction will show how quality writing and research support each other.

Extra Innings and the Postgame Wrap-Up

Inviting ChatGPT to play in these mid-game scenarios prior to the proverbial 9th inning when a summative assessment (such as a final essay) is due in the course advances several important pedagogical principles: (a) minimizing student stress and anxiety by allowing an AI platform to “coach” students to a higher level of critical thinking and writing; (b) promoting equity in the classroom by providing to students of different ability levels a method to interact with their peers successfully; (c) engaging students with a fun, yet challenging, application of technology; and (d) reinforcing how student-generated critical thinking and writing actually outperforms and can improve upon AI-generated thinking and writing.

The foregoing lesson plans are not without the potential for student abuse nor void of fair criticism. Exposing students to the nuances of ChatGPT who otherwise may not have engaged that specific AI platform runs the risk of “teaching” students how to use ChatGPT to complete assignments. However, my experience in teaching 75–100 students each semester at all levels (remedial through honors) and across a myriad of 100- to 400-level courses shows me that virtually every student already knows about ChatGPT and how to use it. Therefore, the risk of student abuse or learning how to “cheat” solely because of these lesson plans appears minimal.

As ChatGPT exponentially “learns” and refines its conversational language approach to something that more closely mimics academic writing, a re-evaluation of the ethics of its use and how the products of its use will be valued is indicated. Once the horse is out the burning barn door, there is no hope of easily putting it back in. Nonetheless, reconsidering the degree of ChatGPT use by students will be paramount to restructuring how students learn to write and, moreover, improve their writing. Likewise, academic research by students will be substantially altered by ChatGPT, not unlike the wholesale changes that occurred when online library databases replaced flipping through the card catalog and perusing dusty library stacks.

Some prescient questions about ChatGPT emerge that faculty must consider in the very near future. Will or should ChatGPT form the basis of many early drafts of student essays? Will or

should this permit students to refine the end product into something substantially better than they could have created independently within the time frame of the assignment? Is it pedagogically appropriate to encourage ChatGPT use as the “base level” of student writing, leaving students only to “improve” what has been prepared for them by an AI platform? Is student critical thinking at the outset of an assignment thus limited to prompt generation for input into an AI platform like ChatGPT? These questions have no easy answers, but the need to address them is quickly approaching. I predict that ChatGPT will force a radical reassessment of writing pedagogy well before the end of this decade. The increased use of ChatGPT by students and faculty alike, together with real-world use in business and industry driving a cultural acceptance of ChatGPT as a time-saving tool, will create a greater pedagogical earthquake than when the calculator replaced the slide rule or when the word processor with spellchecker replaced the typewriter and dictionary. We no longer customarily ask college math students to do long division or multiplication by hand on a sheet of paper, trusting that they learned those principles in elementary and secondary education. We allow the use of a calculator for these “basic” applications to ensure not only speed but also accuracy, preferring our college math pedagogy instead to concentrate on teaching “higher order” principles. Will the same shortly be said in the English composition classroom and throughout other academic disciplines? Should we trust that students have mastered basic writing skills by the time of high school graduation? Based upon large numbers of objective and subjective measures, college faculty know that many students have not mastered these basic writing skills, but will the pressures of real-world readiness cause a creep of ChatGPT into our educational system such that the “basics” will be handled more by machine and less by human? Is the day of the student-cyborg at hand? Certainly, these and other questions will be debated by ethicists and philosophers, as well as by rank-and-file college English faculty, in the ensuing years. Regardless of the answers, however, the future is now and its face is ChatGPT.

Banning ChatGPT outright in a classroom setting appears to be the easy answer to many questions and a last-ditch effort to preserve traditional (and perhaps outdated?) notions of what student critical thinking and writing mean. However, that approach completely ignores the fact that students will use ChatGPT and the professor will play policeman for the entire semester trying to catch offenders on every assignment. Allowing unmitigated use of ChatGPT in the freshman composition course or the literature course does not appear to be a promising approach either, since a core component of any pedagogy in those courses clearly involves teaching critical thinking and

writing skills—something that the student must master aside from merely inputting a prompt into ChatGPT. Therefore, a balanced approach in these courses should be implemented. Blending selected assignments, particularly lower stakes thinking and writing assignments, with ChatGPT use does not retard student writing skills nor critical thinking skills.

The reward of improving student learning outcomes through application of this new and, indeed, exciting technology merits strong consideration to incorporating ChatGPT into existing writing and literature course pedagogy, as well as in other academic disciplines. Ignoring the obvious educational benefits of ChatGPT and going “old school” again just might invite comparison to another classic Yogi-ism: “It’s *déjà vu* all over again!”

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