ENGL *2795: Exploring Writing Centers, 2025

A Changing Landscape: Generative AI in Undergraduate Writing

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Generative AI (GenAI) is a type of artificial intelligence (AI) that can produce content and data in response to user input. GenAI Chatbots are trained with Large Language Models (LLMs) that summarize huge amounts of data from the internet into plain language. Since the introduction of ChatGPT in 2022, GenAI has become increasingly prevalent in daily life, including in higher education. As writing tutors, we inhabit a unique space in which we instruct students on their writing while being students ourselves. The University of Vermont currently does not have an official policy on artificial intelligence, allowing each professor to decide on individual guidelines for their classes. Although the UVM Writing Center offers "AI Literacy" guidance on their website, the university's overall policy results in inconsistency and confusion that we hope to help remedy with this study. We brought our perspective to this five-part investigation, which provided us with a more comprehensive view of the role of GenAI in undergraduate writing. Each group investigated the effect of GenAI on a different aspect of the undergraduate experience. Two composed literature reviews examining the existing scholarship regarding the role of GenAI in undergraduate education and writing centers, while the remaining groups conducted interviews or focus groups with faculty, writing tutors, and students. The insights gained from these five groups—briefly summarized below—are synthesized in this report.

GenAI and Undergraduate Education

Although the inclusion of GenAI in undergraduate education has both benefits and drawbacks as well as ethical concerns, many scholars agree that it's here to stay and universities should therefore respond accordingly. Though GenAI creates opportunities for students to cheat, plagiarize, and take shortcuts in their learning, it also allows students to get 24-hour academic assistance, improve their information literacy, and generate ideas for difficult assignments and projects. While concerns about GenAI's infiltration into undergraduate education are valid, scholars largely agree that working with students to properly educate them on how to most ethically utilize GenAI as a tool will be much more effective for the future than ignoring its existence. It's clear from research that, in order for GenAI to be most effective in undergraduate education, educators and students alike must shift AI from being more "one size fits all" to being more "human-centered."

GenAI and Writing Centers

The GenAI in Writing Centers group did research based mostly on a compilation of academic writing about AI that was collected by Sherry Wynn Perdue of the Oakland University Writing Center. The group found that the new wave of AI powered by Large Language Models (LLM) has been viewed as a "revolution" instead of as the continuation of an already existing escalation in data processing technology. Writing Centers' policy responses to AI, so far, have been highly varied. All the centers that were reviewed had advice for students about best practices when using GenAI; while those

statements often looked similar, Writing Centers were varied in their endorsement of AI in the writing process overall. The group recommends a push for AI literacy such as the Idiap Research Institute recommends with their 12-point guide. But, they also warn that at present, students and professors are confused and somewhat unhappy with university responses to GenAI and are looking for advice on whether or not to use it. GenAI as a product is highly biased, prone to generating incorrect information, and is not actually "Generative" in the human sense. Additionally, huge amounts of water and electricity are wasted in AI data centers. Overall, the group found that AI literacy pedagogy is vital for students who already use AI but would prefer to see clearer critical discussion about AI's place in writing for those with questions about its efficacy and purpose.

GenAI and Faculty

The GenAI and Faculty group analyzed course policies on student AI usage by looking at syllabi from courses taken by ENGL 2795: Exploring Writing Centers students and interviewed eight faculty members to hear their thoughts concerning AI in the university classroom. Analysis of the syllabi found that roughly two-thirds of courses have no specific policy concerning AI usage, while nearly a quarter forbid the use of at least GenAI, and just 10% approve of AI usage by students. All of the interviewed faculty members believe that AI will be around for the foreseeable future, and nearly all of them share concerns about AI taking away students' opportunities to learn new skills. Several believe UVM has not done enough to prepare them for dealing with AI, and many believe the university should develop a strong, clear policy on the technology. Though most of the faculty members oppose GenAI usage by students, one expressed the view that it should be up to each individual student to decide if they use any type of AI to complete their assignments.

GenAI and Students

In order to get a sense of the student body's feelings about GenAI, we conducted two focus groups of five and seven students, respectively. The questions we asked were focused on the students' overall feelings of GenAI, if they use it and when, why they do or don't use it, and their use of it in the writing center. We also asked them about how they think that GenAI should be used in academia, the writing center, and life in general. We tried to focus on what the students think would be a good policy for their professors and their university to adopt.

What was found was that all of the students in the focus groups had negative feelings about GenAI. A majority of students in these groups were also staunchly against GenAI's use and existence. We of course recognize that the students with strong feelings about GenAI who feel comfortable talking about their feelings about it in an official setting are likely to be those who do not use it. Users of GenAI are less likely to want to talk about it in an official capacity because of the stigma around it and the ambiguity of their being allowed to use it. So, the results that we found were very biased against GenAI and the recommendations that the students gave about GenAI showed this. A majority of students in the focus groups said that they would like to see a strict prohibition of GenAI for classwork. That being said, most students also advocated that the first priority upon

discovering a student using GenAI should not be punishment, but education about why the use of GenAI is detrimental to a student's learning.

GenAI and Writing Tutors

The GenAI and Writing Tutors group interviewed six individual tutors at the Undergraduate Writing Center about their opinions on GenAI. There was also a group interview that functioned as an open discussion. Tutors were asked about their experiences with GenAI in and out of the writing centers, as well as their opinions on the ethics of GenAI. Only a few of the tutors interviewed had direct experience with GenAI in the Writing Center. Those who had experienced students using GenAI in the writing center noticed an increase over the past year or two. While the prevailing attitudes among the writing tutors interviewed were negative, this was not without nuance or exception.

The majority of the tutors reported worrying about how GenAI was impacting students' abilities to think critically. Tutors expressed concern that younger students in particular are becoming dependent on AI and don't know how to use it properly. Since there's no university-wide policy on GenAI and professor guidelines are often vague or nonexistent, tutors expressed difficulty knowing what guidance to give students. Most of the tutors acknowledged that getting rid of GenAI completely is not realistic, but opinions on how a balance should be reached were mixed. Some felt that GenAI should be allowed in the classroom in certain instances, while others felt it should be entirely banned in academia but was permissible in other circumstances.

Recommendations

Throughout this study, we were able to comprise some recommendations on how to most effectively move forward with GenAI and its role in secondary education.

AI Literacy*:* As GenAI continues to be incorporated into educational settings, it's important to teach AI literacy to students *and* faculty, create regulations and policies for AI use, and adjust traditional educational practices to account for AI use.

- In educating students and faculty on AI literacy, recommended lessons include how to detect AI content, how to determine the validity of information from AI, how to keep your data private from AI, and how to cite AI as a source.
- It's also important to educate students and faculty on GenAI's limitations and how to verify sources of information provided by GenAI.
- In creating rules, regulations, and policies for the use of GenAI, ongoing conversations with students and faculty about GenAI and its role in the classroom experience, as well as academic integrity, are vital.

University-Wide Policies*:* the implementation of a cohesive university-wide policy is necessary in order to eliminate confusion for both professors and students.

These regulations would define how GenAI should and shouldn't be used in an academic setting, as well as when the use of GenAI is acceptable and inappropriate.

- We recommend that the use of GenAI be prohibited for first year writing students to promote self-sufficiency in writing.

Destigmatize GenAI and Facilitate Open Conversations*:* As it's clear that GenAI is here to stay, it's recommended to destigmatize it and open a discourse regarding its use.

- In writing centers, tutors should be open about students' potential use of AI and should follow the professors' individual guidelines when working with students using AI.
- In the classroom, faculty should devise new forms of assessments that are resistant to GenAI use.

GenAI and Undergraduate Education

While Generative AI (GenAI) technology is in its infancy, its impact on undergraduate education has sparked a discourse in the scholarly community. Academics across disciplines have already begun to publish and discuss their views on GenAI and the role it has on college students and their work, specifically regarding writing. With some highlighting the positives and others emphasizing the negatives, it's clear that a wide range of opinions exist about GenAI and how it should be integrated into writing curriculums.

However, the one commonly agreed upon factor is that it is here to stay in undergraduate education moving forward. Many agree that meeting GenAI with resistance is counterproductive, and that instead we should work to learn more about it and its capabilities. While the consensus is split on its feelings on GenAI and writing, everyone agrees that the conversation must be had. The discourse within the scholarly community regarding GenAI discusses its drawbacks and benefits as well as conversation regarding its ethics, developments, and impacts on students.

Drawbacks

GenAI has undoubtedly sped up and simplified certain processes, but it also presents harmful drawbacks and limits our capabilities as humans. One such drawback is Generative AI's ability to lie. With each new update and technological advancement, it becomes more difficult to distinguish GenAI from reality. From fabricating famous quotes to producing creepily accurate deep fake videos, GenAI messes around in fantasy and fabrication (Baron et al., 2023).

This lack of accuracy extends into writing fields as well. GenAI software is only as good as the data that it is trained with, meaning bad data will produce bad or inaccurate results (Smeds et al., 2023).

In writing, another concern regarding GenAI is the lack of originality. GenAI generates text from existing data, so it can't create new ideas. It is up to the individual authors to develop ideas and writing that are both compelling and unique (Smeds et al., 2023).

It took humans centuries to develop and advance writing systems, yet with AI, we are replacing ourselves and these intuitive systems (Baron et al., 2023). If students begin to rely more on GenAI for generating ideas, they aren't strengthening their own skills, and their usage could turn into overreliance.

Another concern with GenAI is how it should be treated in terms of intellectual property and authorship. Should the credit be received by the author of the data that the AI-based its results on or the GenAI software itself? (Smeds et al., 2023).

More broadly, generative GenAI threatens what jobs may be available to people in the future (Baron et al., 2023). Already, GenAI has burrowed its way into our lives, from word processing to email composition. The question is, what more will GenAI replace?

Generative AI is rooted in language manipulation: synthesizing, translating, and/or producing it (Baron et al., 2023). GenAI only amplifies the harm we cause with language and places it on platforms where it is becoming harder and harder to distinguish fantasy from reality.

Benefits

Although drawbacks to the use of GenAI in undergraduate education exist, sources suggest that there are also a number of benefits to its use. Evmenova et al. explain that ChatGPT can be extremely beneficial at all stages of the writing process. The authors claim that generating outlines for essays is a key function of GenAI in the writing process, and that it can even provide praise for writers on the strong aspects of their writing. They also note that ChatGPT has the capacity to "provide feedback" to students throughout every phase of the writing process, from minute tweaks to comprehensive adjustments (Evmenova et al. 2024). But the writers emphasize that what makes ChatGPT and GenAI the most enticing as an educational tool and most valuable to students is the immediacy in which they receive their feedback (Evmenova et al. 2024).

Many college students complete their work and assignments late in the evenings after professors are no longer responding to emails for the night. So, if it's the day before a deadline or the student has a burning question, the immediacy at which GenAI can provide feedback or answer a student's question is appealing, rather than waiting for a professor's response.

Cardon et al. also note GenAI's effectiveness at the beginning stages of writing. However, they expand this idea to specifically mention getting writers started while working in groups, especially group work involving "research proposals" (Cardon et al. 2023). The writers note that group proposals are often an assignment that their students struggle with, and they explain that using GenAI to generate ideas can be especially useful in this setting.

It's certain that some concerns exist regarding GenAI's impact on the integrity of undergraduate student work, but it's also clear that GenAI is the wave of the future and isn't going anywhere anytime soon. There are numerous ways in which GenAI can positively contribute to and aid undergraduate education. Educating students and educators alike on how to best utilize it to enhance student work and learning rather than using it as a crutch can only increase and emphasize these benefits.

Ethics

The increasing use of Generative AI in higher education, and the technology's proficiency with human language, raises concerns over the ethics and academic integrity of using such tools. There are two sides to these concerns, the first being the fact that GenAI sources information from various sources online and provides no way to cite sources. Further complicating this use of GenAI is that GenAI can, at times, fabricate, falsify, or hallucinate information, and it can be dangerous to take this information at face value (Bozkurt 2024).

In Zainurrahman (2024), they discuss one potential use for GenAI that would avoid this issue. The authors suggest using GenAI technology to provide

feedback on written projects. They explain that although we are aware of the benefits of feedback, it can be very time consuming for educators, so using GenAI for this would free up time for other initiatives. More importantly from the GenAI ethics side, is that this use is primarily focused on the student's own work—not pulling in content from other unspecified platforms, reducing the chance of plagiarism (Zainurrahman 2024).

The other concern discussed in Bokurt (2024) is the concept of ownership, and co-authorship. The 1976 Copyright Act requires that any copyrighted work have human authorship, meaning that anything created with GenAI would be automatically under the public domain (Bokurt 2024). Considering GenAI generated work doesn't meet the requirements for authorship, Bokurt (2024) claims that GenAI shouldn't be cited as a coauthor. However, there are worries about someone taking GenAI work and passing it off as their own. The field is still working on ways to verify human contribution to a work, however in the meantime Bokurt suggests transparency with specifically how GenAI was used, including the prompts and parameters given.

One final ethical concern mentioned in Zainurrahman (2024) is the data privacy concerns. The authors explain that due to the potential issues, students should be careful to remove personal information before giving work to GenAI.

Developments

Just as our understanding of GenAI evolves, so too does GenAI develop and adapt over time. Chen et al. (2022) draw from a number of sources and highlight how AI can be applied to and be helpful in a wide variety of educational contexts, especially in fields like computer science and software engineering.

AI in education can aid with, and bring about, more effective teaching outcomes and advancements in theory and technology (Chen et al., 2022). It can also assist teachers in more effective instruction, providing personalized learning approaches and addressing knowledge gaps; additionally, educational systems that utilize AI exist and can be used to monitor student engagement and classroom dynamics, analyses which can then be used to help students themselves (Chen et al., 2022).

However, the authors also acknowledge that the effectiveness of AI models significantly decreases the broader the context it is applied to; they suggest avoiding "overfitting" and applying models across many different scenarios (like different demographics or levels of education) in order to properly test models' effectiveness (Chen et al., 2022).

In a similar vein, Yang's 2021 article calls for AI in educational contexts to be more "human-centered", which he warns is difficult for AI to do. He acknowledges that AI can have many benefits in education, but only if properly and ethically applied; as AI is used increasingly in education for research purposes, it has been shown to have difficulty in interpreting more precise and specialized knowledge, as it becomes used to "general-purpose intelligence" and "the one-size-fits-all approach" (Yang, 2021).

Impacts on Students

Across literature, there are discussions of both negative and positive impacts GenAI has on students. Positively, GenAI has the ability to act as a tool for supporting diversity and individualized needs (Kim et al., 2025) (Sullivan et al., 2023). ESL students are particularly benefited, as the translative and integrative aspects of AI can help reduce a potential language barrier.

GenAI is also associated with reducing feelings of anxiety, particularly in the idea generation phase of an assignment (Kim et al., 2025). As GenAI is artificial, students feel more comfortable allowing the tool to proofread their writing as they know the feedback is nonjudgmental. Students find that having a neutral source of information/ feedback, especially for grammatical or punctuational errors, enhances feelings of joy, support, and even contributes to a sense of self efficacy.

Not only do students feel like AI is a collaborative tool for idea generation, topic knowledge, and writing skills (Kim et al., 2025) (Sullivan et al., 2023), some consider it to be a 'digital peer,' feeling a sense of true friendly connection to the technology (Kim et al., 2025).

Despite the support that GenAI provides for diversity in some contexts, it is also associated with the reaffirmation of discriminatory values and biases via the responses elicited and language used (Kim et al., 2025) (Sullivan et al., 2023). Students also recognize the limits that GenAI has in terms of contextual/ cultural knowledge, as its knowledge can only go as far as its respective algorithm.

Higher level thinking and information literacy are imperative skills for students to possess in order to be effective writers and learners (Kim et al., 2025) (Sullivan et al., 2023). GenAI has the potential to stimulate the development of these skills if a student learns how to use the technology properly (Sullivan et al., 2023).

Since the creation of GenAI is relatively novel, complex, and likely permanent, the implementation of education surrounding the effective and ethical use of the tools is emphasized across literature. Promotion of the appropriate use of AI would contribute to positive societal appraisal and reduce infractions of academic integrity, which is a major concern students have. The perception students have of AI is directly correlated to how it is used, meaning an ethical perception would lead to more ethical use (Sullivan et al., 2023).

Recommendations

Although the use of GenAI in undergraduate education should be limited to appropriate and ethical use, it is difficult to establish general guidelines. The simplest solution may be to prohibit the use of the software entirely, but this would likely be unrealistic due to its increasing prevalence and availability. In addition, there are many positives to the use of GenAI in undergraduate education for both students and educators that should not be disregarded.

Mitigating the use of GenAI in undergraduate education is a complex issue, therefore the recommendations for promoting appropriate use must be equally as such. One specific strategy relating to the drafting and/or research

process would include double checking the sources of information elicited by GenAI, as there is often a lack of source information when using the software. On a similar note, checking for biases within the language or information provided by GenAI itself is imperative. While using GenAI, disclosing as little personal information as possible is essential, as there could be potential data privacy issues.

Within the assessment process of undergraduate education, the misuse of GenAI provides a potential for infractions of academic integrity. To combat this, it is recommended that educators implement new assessment types that cannot be reproduced or completed with AI.

As GenAI becomes increasingly relevant in the world, it is important to become familiar with skills fostering its effective and ethical use as well. Incorporating opportunities for AI literacy into undergraduate education would not only allow students to learn about how GenAI can be appropriately used but would also teach skills about how to use GenAI as a tool. AI literacy would also work to promote the software as a tool rather than a cheating device, which contributes toward ethical use.

With the consideration of the recommendations provided, GenAI can be an effective and helpful tool that works with people towards their success in undergraduate education.

GenAI and Writing Centers

History and Context

Generative AI (GenAI), a type of artificial intelligence that has solidified its stance in educational institutions and the modern zeitgeist, has recently emerged in writing centers nationwide. The introduction of newer GenAI models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Transformer, and DALL-E in 2022, revolutionized how artificial intelligence perceives human natural language processing through audio-visual generative models (Akhtar, 2024). Writing center tutors have had to adjust to the changing technological landscape by asserting the importance of their roles and creating spaces for interpersonal communication that GenAI evidently does not provide for writers. Although artificial intelligence has existed for decades prior to GenAI, it is essential to understand the history and context of GenAI and large language models (LLMs) before delving into writing center policies, recommendations for guidance and use, and its limitations.

The roots of AI trace back to 1942 when the short story "Runaround" was published by writer Isaac Asimov, concerning the interaction between robots, AI, and computer science. Around the same time, English mathematician Alan Turing developed a machine named "The Bombe" for the British government to break codes developed by enemy forces (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). He followed this with a 1950 article on creating machines with intelligence and how one can test its level of intelligence. The article established a benchmark for all AI creators: the Turing Test. Authors Haenlein and Kaplan define it as "if a human is interacting with another human and a machine and is unable to distinguish the machine from the human, then the machine is said to be intelligent" (2019, pp. 6-7). Following the introduction of the Turing Test, the term "artificial intelligence" was coined by Marvin Minsky and John McCarthy at the Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence (DSRPAI) at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). However, the GenAI scene has developed beyond simple computer calculations programmed by humans.

In 2022, the emergence of ChatGPT, a widely used platform that generates written content from human input prompts, sparked conversations about the usage of this technology. According to UT Southwestern Health Sciences Digital Library and Learning Center, AI chatbots employ LLMs to produce human-like responses, and they connect to the Internet to access up-to-date information to inform users about their inquiries (2025). However, ethical concerns and considerations accompany the remarkable advancements made in 2022. Writing centers nationwide have factored this into their policies and guidelines surrounding GenAI usage, but there is still room for improvement for all parties involved.

Writing Center Policies

Writing centers are one of the most important settings for the new discussion of GenAI. As a community dedicated to not only writing and communication, but thinking about the structures that language operates within, many writing centers and writing center academics have jumped to discuss this new technology. Generally, the writing centers and academics that have begun to discuss GenAI have regarded it as a neutral technology, with some strengths and some weaknesses.

UVM's Undergraduate Writing Center has a robust web page about AI and best practices for students using the technology. It states, "GenAI has the potential to enhance your learning," but also that it can be factually wrong or "...get you into academic integrity trouble if you misuse it." The guide also discusses common pitfalls and ethical questions that AI can pose for students (UVM Undergraduate Writing Center). This page presents a fairly unbiased perspective, neither pro- nor anti-AI.

UNC Chapel Hill's Writing Center also has a robust page concerning AI. This page is written primarily for students and is also in the style of a guide. The page devotes relatively more attention to discussing AI's potential pitfalls than its uses in comparison to the UVM guide. However, they do include a robust, detailed section on writing useful prompts and a long list of other AI capabilities like translation, editing, and summarization (The Writing Center, 2023).

The University of Michigan's Sweetland Center for Writing goes a bit further in empowering students to use AI in the writing process, even discussing the University's own chatbot and directing students there. In the student-oriented guide, they allude throughout the page to various AI shortcomings, but primarily focus on the technology's positives, and where students can use it most effectively. Unlike the two other guide-styled statements, the Sweetland Center doesn't include a "risks" section to detail the ways AI could hurt student's writing (Sweetland Center for Writing).

Elon University's Center for Excellence in Writing has a somewhat different tone. Their statement is not a guide, but rather a collection of other guides they've compiled, with an introductory paragraph that distinguishes between "writing to learn" and writing with AI. They indicate that the processes which make writing so vital to those who want to "participate actively and critically in civic and professional life" might be threatened by AI-powered writing. Similarly to the other statements, they do not deny that AI writing has valid applications, but they appreciate it as a new technology rather than a tool for writing (Center for Excellence in Writing, 2024). In some ways, this statement offers a deeper, more textured stance than the previous guides. As the statement is more general, and not aimed at students who will use AI regardless, Elon University offers a nuanced, philosophical opinion on AI in writing.

This tendency towards "AI guides" reflects the initial reaction to new GenAI: a push for AI literacy. This dynamic might indicate that some institutions don't want to offer subjective critiques of AI-informed writing, as Elon University's Writing

Center does. Rather, they discuss best use practices without contributing to students' and professors' overall discourse on the ethics of AI use in writing.

Recommendations for Gen AI Guidance and Policies

The rampant spread of accessibility to GenAI has left many fields scrambling to figure out how to coexist with this technology, especially educational institutions. While it's still very early and thus hard to speculate the future landscape regarding GenAI in these institutions, the concept of AI literacy has been cropping up recently. Defined as "a set of competencies that enables individuals to critically evaluate AI technologies" (Long & Magerko, 2020), faculty and students more educated on AI, specifically GenAI, means we can be better prepared to use it more productively and ethically if we chose to do so. In 2024, the Idiap Research

Institute in Switzerland composed a 12-point model for GenAI literacy. The key points in this model are as follows:

1. **Basic AI Literacy:** Establishes a baseline understanding of AI concepts, laying down the groundwork for familiarity with GenAI.

2. **Knowledge of Generative AI models:** Provides a peripheral understanding of the workings of GenAI.

3. **Knowledge of the capacity and limitation of Generative AI:** Equips individuals with the proficiency to assess the capabilities and constraints of GenAI tools.

4. **Skill to use Generative AI tools:** Promotes practical proficiency to effectively leverage GenAI tools in diverse contexts.

5. **Ability to detect AI-generated content:** Teaches the skill of discerning AI-generated content.

6. **Ability to assess the output of generative AI tools:** Provides the ability to critically assess output quality, relevance, and potential biases.

7. **Skill in prompting generative AI tools (Prompt Engineering):** Nurtures the creative aspect of working with GenAI, allowing individuals to tailor personalized outputs to specific objectives or creative efforts.

8. **Ability to program and fine-tune:** Provides the technical know-how necessary for the customization and optimization of GenAI models to suit specific needs.

9. **Knowledge of the contexts where generative AI is used:** Understand the diverse applications and limitations of GenAI across situations, institutions, and professions to assess the appropriateness of using GenAI tools.

10. **Knowledge of the Ethical Implications:** Augments technical proficiency with ethical considerations and inculcates a

sense of responsibility by making individuals aware of the ethical considerations tied to the use of GenAI.

11. **Knowledge of Legal Aspects:** Addresses legal dimensions, ensuring individuals operate within the bounds of intellectual property and other legal frameworks associated with the use of GenAI.

12. **Ability to continuously Learn:** Promotes a mindset of continuous learning to stay updated with evolving GenAI technologies, methodologies, and ethical considerations (Annapureddy, Fornaroli, & Gaticia-Perez, 2024).

The paper goes on to explain the benefits of each point, as well as the drawbacks of not being literate in them. GenAI is a very complicated and even more polarizing issue, but one of the first steps in tackling it is beginning to understand it, which can help us potentially predict and handle the ramifications of it better.

The question is no longer whether GenAI should be implemented; it is a matter of how. Universities are scrambling to write policies concerning using Gen AI in college classes. One-third of universities surveyed had GenAI-related policy, and of those surveyed universities, student confidence in the tool is low (Moorhouse, 2023). It is unclear to students when GenAI is permissible in a course, often leading to improper use of the tool or placing the decision to use it up to the professors, who are often unfamiliar with GenAI (Moorhouse, 2023). As more research is done, Chat GPT and other LLMs are cited as authors in research papers when, ethically, the tool cannot be cited as an author (Nature, 2023). When publishing academic literature, ownership and responsibility fall onto the authors. A GenAI program cannot take responsibility for the information it feeds researchers and, thus, cannot be a trusted author of academic literature (Nature, 2023).

GenAI and Faculty

The GenAI and Faculty group took on two main projects: analyzing syllabi data and conducting a series of eight interviews with professors across the disciplines. First, for the syllabi data project, all the tutors in our writing tutoring class uploaded the syllabi for the courses that they are currently taking to Microsoft Teams. Together, our research group compiled data on the Class Tutors' syllabi, where we classified each syllabus according to the strictness of the course's Artificial Intelligence policy. Then, part of our group created graphs which help visualize and analyze the data extracted from the syllabi.

These include the departmental makeup of the data and visualization of policy severity – overall and within course levels.

For the second project, we developed a list of candidate interviewees, and we developed a list of standard questions to ask our interviewees, all to do with AI. Next, we conducted interviews with eight faculty members, taking down a transcription of the interviews using an AI transcription program called Otter. We cleaned up the transcriptions, highlighting portions which represent the essence of what the faculty members were saying about AI.

Syllabi Data

To obtain syllabus data, all members of the "Exploring Writing Centers" class uploaded the syllabus for each of the classes they are currently enrolled in. A total of 76 syllabi were uploaded and used in data analyzation. To generate an accurate depiction of what type of courses were used in the analysis, a pie chart depicting the proportions of each discipline (STEM, humanities, and social sciences) was created:

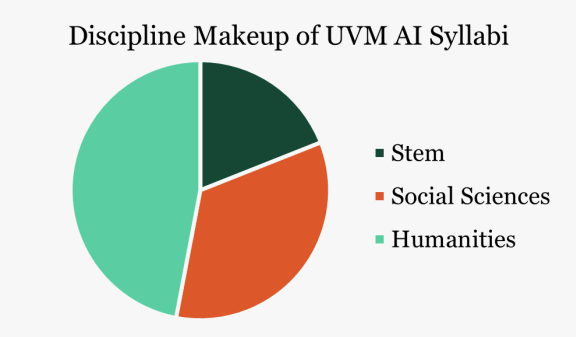

Figure 1: Proportion of Each Discipline as a Makeup of AI Syllabus Data for Further Analysis.

It was observed that the humanities made up the largest percentage (47%) of the syllabi makeup, followed by social sciences (34%), then STEM (19%). Two courses were omitted from this chart, as they were independent learning-based Honors College Courses with non-specific course work that aligned with a discipline. These ratios should be considered when examining subsequent analyses.

A ranking system to organize syllabi strictness was made on a scale of 0 to 4.0 represents course syllabi with no AI policy, 1 represents course syllabi with a policy that forbids the usage of any AI, 2 represents course syllabi that only forbids the usage of Generative AI, 3 represents course syllabi that approve of supplemental usage - ranging from encouraged usage as a study tool to usage for further learning outside of class - of AI or Generative AI for supplementation, and 4 represents course syllabi that encourage the usage of AI or Generative AI. It was observed that the majority of courses (67%) had no AI policy, followed by courses that bar the usage of any AI (14%), then courses that only forbid the usage of

Generative AI (9%) and courses that approve of supplemental usage of AI (9%), and finally by courses that encourage the usage of AI (1%). It should be noted that out of the syllabi, 25% cite only the University of Vermont's Academic Dishonesty policy with no additional explicit AI policy.

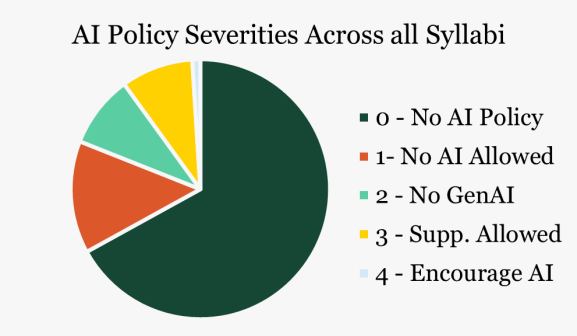

Figure 2: AI Policy Severities Ranked Across all Course Syllabi Data

In all course levels, course syllabi with a score of 0, or no AI policy, made up the largest percentage. The only course level with a score of 4, encouraging the usage of AI, was a Level 2000 course. There were more Level 1000 and Level 2000 course syllabi than other courses, with 24 and 31 syllabi respectively. It should also be noted that the departmental makeup of the data impacts the results. Due to this, extrapolation works best for disciplines within the humanities, then the social sciences, and then STEM.

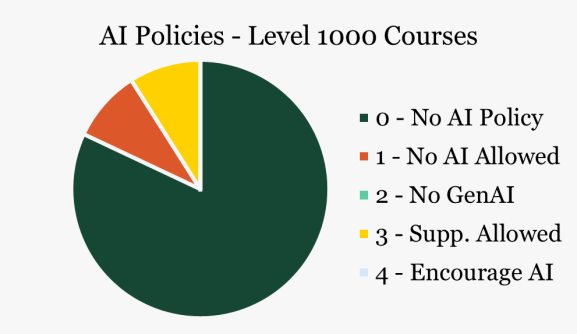

Figure 3: AI Policy Severities Ranked for Level 1000 Courses showing approximately 82% with no AI Policy, 9% with policies that forbid AI generally, 0% with policies that forbid generative AI, 3% that allow supplemental use, and 0% that encourage AI use.

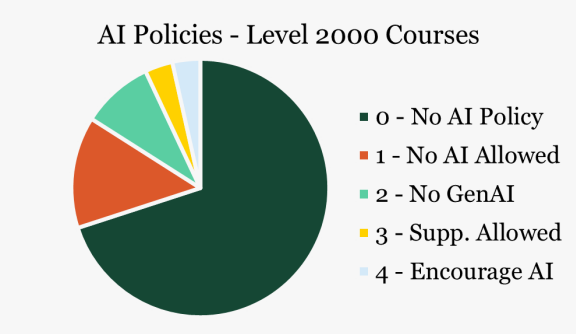

Figure 4: AI Policy Severities Ranked for Level 2000 Courses showing approximately 70% with no AI Policy, 14% with policies that forbid AI generally, 9% with policies that forbid generative AI, 3.5% that allow supplemental use, and 3.5% that encourage AI use.

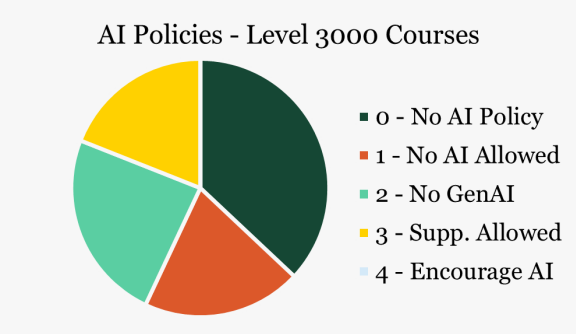

Figure 5: AI Policy Severities Ranked for Level 3000 Courses showing approximately 37% with no AI Policy, 20% with policies that forbid AI generally, 24% with policies that forbid generative AI, 19% that allow supplemental use, and 0% that encourage AI use.

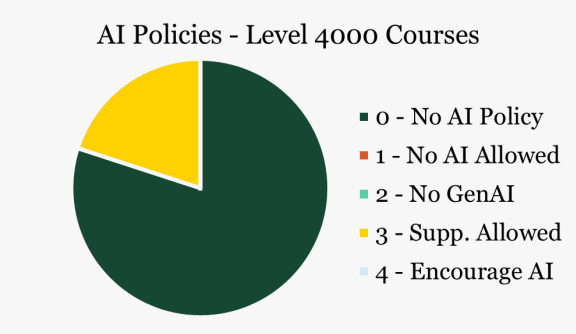

Figure 6: AI Policy Severities Ranked for Level 4000 Courses showing approximately 80% with no AI Policy, 0% with policies that forbid AI generally, 0% with policies that forbid generative AI, 20% that allow supplemental use, and 0% that encourage AI use.

Interview Trends

Our group conducted a total of 8 interviews with faculty members from across different STEM, Humanities, and Social Science backgrounds. Faculty members shared diverse views on the place of Generative AI in the classroom, their personal and professional lives, and the future. That said, every faculty member converged on the view that Generative AI seems to be taking root in university life in a way where we can expect that AI is here to stay.

Additionally, all faculty members, with one exception, expressed the view that AI has the potential to stunt the development of skills in students. About half of the faculty members expressed the views that AI is under-addressed in university policies, in the sense that it's not clear how cases of GenAI usage should be treated, and that having professors individually deal with AI puts a burdening workload on the professors as well as strains relationships between students and faculty. Lastly, one professor expressed the view that they are completely fine with all AI usage and that it's up to the individual to determine what they want to get out of their education.

Faculty expressed a wide range of views on personal and professional usage of AI. Some faculty members expressed disinterest in AI, while others talked about how their band used it to draw an album cover. One faculty member used GenAI to proofread their abstract, while others emphasized how specific STEM fields have AI tools which help with research. Two faculty members expressed fear that GenAI is a long-term threat to academic institutions. Some of the faculty members even expressed views about possible apocalyptic scenarios, such as instructions on how to create a bomb, that could come about from AI usage and AI. The views on individual usage of AI are thus mixed, both in terms of personal life and professional use.

The reason why some faculty members have not yet used AI in their professional lives is because they either have not had the opportunity to do so yet, or that they know that, for their field, use of AI is not yet developed and honed to a point where AI can do the work that humans are doing. Using AI might be useful in some ways, but it makes some obvious mistakes that the human researchers have to correct once the AI has done its work. As AI becomes better at doing its job, researchers will use it more and develop the skills for doing so, some faculty members think.

Across the board, faculty members expressed the view, either implicitly through their reports about their actions or explicitly, that AI is taking root in the academic world. Some faculty members expressed worry about this fact, though most of that worry was directed at the usages of AI on the part of students rather than on the part of faculty members. Some expressed worry about both sorts of usage, especially those in humanities discourses.

Almost every faculty member expressed the view that the overuse of AI on the part of students could have inhibiting effects on the development of students' abilities to do their expected and required work. The rationale is that if students are taking shortcuts on assignments in lower-level classes, or on assignments at the beginning of the semester, then those students won't

have the skills to complete assignments in higher-level classes, or through the rest of the semester. Some professors in the humanities took that formula and applied it to professional academics as well, describing a worry that those professionals would lose out on writing skills which are crucial for the job.

Many of the faculty members shared the view that there is not enough said and done on the part of the university in preparing faculty to deal with AI, or in helping faculty address AI usage when it crops up. One worry that these faculty members expressed was that the faculty who are teaching need to come up with different assignments, which make using AI more challenging and less rewarding, and thus find themselves with a greater workload. Some faculty members expressed that they do not want the students who don't use AI to be punished for what the AI-using students do or disadvantaged by the fact that there will be students who use AI, which adds two layers of complexity to the project of coming up with new assignments.

Another concern is that, once the faculty member suspects that AI has been used, the aftermath can be damaging to relationships between faculty and classes. A third concern is that it's not at all clear how and why the usage of AI breaks any of the university policies against academic dishonesty. One professor expressed the view that the usage of AI breaks all four of the academic dishonesty categories, while another seemed to view an infringement of their AI rule on the syllabus as distinct from their rule against plagiarism.

Lastly, in terms of AI and UVM policy, many faculty members expressed the view that this is the time for UVM to take on a strong, clear policy about AI usage. The professors are struggling to deal with cases of AI in part due to the fact that the policies on using GenAI aren't rigid enough. Furthermore, faculty members expressed the view that this is a conversation that we should be having at the university level. We need to have classes on the ethics of using AI, conversations about what happens when we use AI, and we need to create awareness about the threat that it poses to students' learning. STEM, Humanities, and Social Science faculty members alike expressed this view. Some professors even expressed the idea that teaching a class on how to use AI might have a home at universities. One faculty member thinks that it's not clear whether there will be a class that teaches AI, that it might be something that we continue to teach on the level of training for a particular job that requires proficiency in a particular artificial intelligence tool.

One faculty member in a STEM field was distinct from the rest of the group in sharing the view that AI is okay to use, even by students. The professor's view was that students are going to get out of their education the work that they put in, and that students who want to use AI should be able to. The faculty members shared the view that it's possible that some writing skills become obsolete, and that we might not have to be all that worried about that fact. This view contrasts, though does not quite contradict, the view of another STEM field faculty member who stated that AI does a pretty poor job at following the styles and conventions of scientific writing.

In summary, there were wide views on AI in terms of personal/professional use, the place it has in the classroom, the role of the university, and the conversations that we should be having.

Recommendations

Our group has developed several recommendations for the university on how to address the concerns that the faculty members have shared. There seem to be two major questions that most faculty members are interested in, when it comes to AI. First, lots of faculty members are concerned that AI is making the classroom experience worse in certain ways, and they want to maintain relationships that they have with their students and limit the amount of work that they are putting into workaround AI. Second, faculty members are also hoping to have conversations about AI and ethics in the university. We believe that we can address both questions at the same time.

There is a call for a larger conversation concerning GenAI, where representatives from groups across the university come together to figure out how to address ethics and AI. There are many questions concerning professional use, personal use, pedagogical use, and plagiaristic use, which all need to be asked and talked about by many different people from different fields. It's possible that these conversations yield consensus and provide a pathway towards establishing a university policy that takes a particular stance on AI usage in certain contexts. It's also possible that these conversations don't yield that result, that the decisions on how to use AI remain decisions for departments or individual faculty members.

At the minimum, faculty will get a chance to share experiences about how AI has been hurting the classroom experience, and people will come together to brainstorm ways for the university to begin to address this problem. For instance, the committee of faculty members may come away from the discussion on AI with a better idea on how tools like ChatGPT should be understood in the context of the policy on academic integrity. It's possible that the committee would suggest updating the wording and adding explicit connections to AI in the university-wide policy on academic integrity. In any case, such conversations would put the university on the path to fostering a clearer, more concrete environment concerning the use of AI in the classroom, reducing confusion and increasing understanding for both students and faculty.

GenAI and Students

With the recent technological advancements and growing popularity of Generative AI (GenAI) software, such as ChatGPT, concerns have been raised regarding the ethics surrounding its use—specifically its use in universities—has in turn grown more ambiguous. Questions such as whether or not GenAI should be used in the university classroom, to what extent it should be used, or if using it violates universities' honor codes have been on the rise. The issue of how to respond to GenAI usage in academic settings has been pervasive throughout all areas of the University and is especially relevant to our work in the Undergraduate Writing Center. In our search for the answers to these questions, we turned to University of Vermont students to hear their perspectives.

By cultivating student focus groups, we attempted to understand what university students think about the use of GenAI in the classroom. We held a total of two focus groups, each lasting an hour and hosted by fellow UVM students. The first took place on February 10 and consisted of seven students. The second focus group took place on February 19 and consisted of five students. For the second group, two of the participants were selected using the voluntary survey, and three were randomly selected by recruiting students in the library. They took place in the Howe Library right next to the Undergraduate Writing Center. We aimed to include students of various years and majors in order to obtain as many perspectives as possible.

We obtained our student pool using a volunteer sample by sending out mass emails detailing our study, as well as hanging up posters around campus. To entice participants, we promised compensation in the form of free pizza. We ensured that the participants understood the purpose of our research before participating and had them sign a consent form. The consent form reassured them that their participation and answers surrounding their use of GenAI would not be used against them and gave us permission to record them using the transcription service Otter.ai.

The focus groups themselves were informal and loosely scaffolded, consisting of participant-facilitated discussions of questions about GenAI posed by the student researchers. By collecting the unfiltered thoughts of UVM students about how GenAI is and should be used by university students, we hope to create a code of conduct surrounding GenAI that not only reflects the university's existing academic integrity model but also considers the perspectives and needs of students.

Focus Group Analysis

The questions that guided our focus groups were written with the intent to gather information on three focal topics—student use of GenAI, use of GenAI in the Undergraduate Writing Center, and desired changes for the role of GenAI in academia—in order to best make informed recommendations for GenAI Intelligence guidance, use, and policy. Our questions increased in specificity over time to promote engagement and build on previous ideas, beginning with prompts such as, "what are your overall feelings about GenAI?" and slowly transitioning to

questions that prompted more critical thought, “would you find it valuable for writing tutors to be informed of the benefits and drawbacks of using GenAI? How come?” We also often diverged from that format to respond to the tone of the discussion, allowing us to better prioritize the information we sought or to hear more from participants who had unique ideas on a given subject. For example, when participants seemed hesitant to share about instances in which they used GenAI, we would ask how they have witnessed other people use it or what they understand about how it can be used. Responses to these questions were typically richer in detail, which helped us to more often avoid some of the common disclosure issues within group interviews by not forcing individuals to claim ownership while sharing their ideas.

A crucial bias in our data reporting is that our information was likely not collected from a representative sample. We can infer from our own experiences as students that the proportion of participants that were strongly against the use of GenAI was, in both focus groups, greater than that proportion across the entire student body—on a given day in the Howe Library, one could, with much certainty, find that students are either using GenAI or are okay with others using GenAI at a rate greater than one or two people out of every ten. We believe this issue in our sample arose from the possibility that students who are against the use of GenAI would be more eager to discuss it, either because they would not feel ashamed of their opinions or because they would be more interested than GenAI users in changing current policies.

Additionally, our location for the focus groups being the Undergraduate Writing Center means that our participants were likely more familiar with us, which implies that their general attitudes and independence in navigating their education may not be representative of the general student body.

Though we attempted to mitigate the reporting bias arising from sharing opinions that differ from the majority or break conformity, we acknowledge that there was likely still some hesitance in participants to share all of their experiences. In both focus groups, the participants who shared most often and who were the first to respond were strongly against the use of GenAI, which set the tone for the rest of our discussions. “I’m the number one hater of Generative AI,” said the first person to respond to our initial question, and even people who ultimately disclosed that they use GenAI agreed with this first statement. One student posed the strong rhetorical question: “what's the point of even having a brain if you outsource the brain part?” We acknowledge biases likely present in our data both in the form of sampling and disclosure, and we intend to account for such biases in our analysis and recommendations.

As far as the responses that students gave in the focus groups, reactions to generative AI and its use were overwhelmingly negative. When asked directly about their use of generative AI, only 3 out of the 12 students answered in any way indicating that they have used GenAI in the past. Those 3 who indicated their use also added many caveats to their answers, acknowledging their perception that GenAI is unethical, fallible, or a waste of time. In fact, most

of the students who answered that they do not use GenAI cited those aforementioned reasons as why they do not.

The most common opinion was that GenAI is unethical to use. Either for environmental issues, intellectual property issues, bias issues, or a combination of the three, every student who did not use GenAI had these perceptions about GenAI and gave them as reasons for why they condemn the use of it in academic settings. However, when we asked them how they would feel about GenAI if these issues were reconciled, most students responded that they would be more open to GenAI. There were also some students that said they would still condemn the use of GenAI if those issues could be fixed, as they perceive GenAI to be an incentive for students to not give their best effort on assignments.

Some students expressed a few positive elements of GenAI software, citing its accessibility and utility as a tool. Copy editing was one of the major accepted possible uses for GenAI as well as strategies that did not involve the direct creation of content by GenAI such as brainstorming or giving feedback in certain cases.

Overall, the main themes that came up around feelings on Generative AI in the focus group were:

1. Academic dishonesty
    a. When asked about GenAI policies in syllabi, one student remarked that “it goes next to the ‘no cheating’ [part of the syllabus], because [GenAI] is just another form of academic dishonesty.”
2. Wasting one’s education
3. Stealing from creators (the AI software)
4. Questionable credibility
    a. Multiple students described “not trusting” information generated by AI and doubting the credibility of such software.
5. Generative AI can be a useful tool
6. People are over-reliant on AI/use it as a crutch
7. Generative AI can increase accessibility
8. Negative environmental impact

To conclude, the majority of students in our focus groups did not use GenAI for ethical reasons related to academic consequences, personal learning, or economic and environmental impacts. Those who do use GenAI also acknowledged the significance of those ethical concerns. We also acknowledge the bias in our sample of students against GenAI and the possibility of hesitance to be fully honest with perceived authority figures in an academic setting about GenAI.

Recommendations

Based on this analysis, our group has created policy recommendations for three distinctive academic entities: the university, the professor, and the writing center. If one were to take our (admittedly biased) focus groups' feelings at face value, students would like to see the university make a blanket anti-GenAI use policy. For the university, this would mean a rework of current policy which would treat the use of GenAI as a violation of the standards

set by the Code of Academic Integrity. This would require updating these standards to include GenAI as part of the section either on plagiarism or the section on cheating.

If the university continues to leave it up to the individual professor whether the use of GenAI in the classroom is permitted, distinctive punishments must be in place by the Center for Student Conduct for those utilizing GenAI in unpermitted circumstances similar to those given to students found plagiarizing, and these punishments should made clear in all media that already describes other punishments and/or outlines processes.

Assuming a continuation of the university's current GenAI policy, in which it is up to the individual professor whether GenAI use is permitted for assignments, our group suggests professors create clear policies in their syllabi that outline the following:

1. Whether GenAI is allowed in the class in any capacity.
2. If GenAI is allowed, indicate on which assignments it is allowed, and which steps in completing the assignment it should/can be used.

Our group also recommends that professors who allow the use of GenAI require citations and a format for such citations that include the prompts used in order to understand the student's thought process and create maximum opportunity for replication to ensure the student is not plagiarizing under the guise of having used a GenAI chatbot. For professors who prohibit the use of GenAI in their classes, our group recommends familiarizing yourself with the language often replicated by these programs and the various GenAI and GenAI-masking tools available rather than solely relying on detection programs. Unfortunately, these detectors can be "tricked" and may falsely identify original work as having been created by GenAI.

The Undergraduate Writing Center, as a space for supporting writers and writing, must be inclusive to the range of GenAI use that might appear in a setting where tutees are coming from different professors and situations that range in their acceptance of GenAI use. To accommodate this, our group recommends that the UWC not be directly opposed to GenAI but defer to the professor's instructions. If a student isn't supposed to use GenAI for an assignment brought in, tutors should make clear to them the risks and avoid using it as a tool both in the session and/or as a suggested tool for after the session has concluded.

As we also suggested for professors, tutors should be familiar with the language replicated by GenAI to recognize its potential use in a student's writing, and with the consequences of its use: globally, at a university-level, and at a class-level. Tutors should work to promote students' agency in writing by discouraging GenAI, so as to avoid issues brought up in our focus groups. Instead, sessions might include discussions about the things GenAI is doing for the tutee (structure, organization, etc.) and how they might develop those skills for themselves. Our group would not suggest that tutors be trained in prompt writing or other skills that might improve GenAI use for themselves or their tutees.

GenAI and Writing Tutors

The goal of this investigation was to understand writing tutors' perspectives on how students use and perceive Generative AI (GenAI). Specifically, this research focused on writing tutors at the Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC) at the University of Vermont (UVM). As peer tutors, these individuals operate at the intersection of being students and writing tutors employed by the UWC. As a result, they carry a unique understanding and point of view around how UVM's students interact with GenAI, and especially how UVM students use GenAI in the writing center environment.

We conducted qualitative interviews with six writing tutors to learn about their experiences with GenAI as a UWC employee and as a student. These tutors were selected by convenience, usually interviewed by fellow tutors they shared UWC shifts with. It is important to acknowledge the sampling bias present in this method, as this was a convenience sample based on those tutors who were willing to be interviewed when researchers were available. In addition to these individual interviews, we attended one tutor meeting, where we posed the same set of open-ended questions to a group of 12 experienced writing tutors. This allowed us to engage with a more representative sample of tutors at the UWC.

We ran this meeting as an open discussion, which allowed participants to respond to any given question and engage in dialogue with one another. One tutor had been interviewed individually but chose to stay for the group discussion. The other participants were not interviewed individually.

The six writing tutors included in this report will be listed anonymously. Tutor 1 is a senior English major who has been tutoring at the UWC for two years. Tutor 2, a senior Communication Sciences and Disorders major, has been tutoring for three years. Tutor 3 is a senior Public Health Sciences major and has been tutoring for three years. Tutor 4 is a senior Psychological Science major who has been tutoring for a year and a half. Tutor 5 is a senior History major and has been tutoring for two years. Tutor 6 is a senior with a double major in English and French who has been tutoring for two years.

These interviews focused on four main themes. First, we explored tutors' general experiences with GenAI in the writing center, hoping to understand how these experiences may have changed over time. We also asked tutors about the overall trends in GenAI use they have perceived, such as the typical class years and majors for students who use the technology as well as the type of writing they use GenAI for. In addition, we asked about tutors' personal attitudes towards GenAI and how their experiences in the UWC may have impacted these attitudes. Lastly, we investigated tutors' perceptions of the ethics of GenAI in academic writing and beyond. This report discusses the experiences and perceptions shared by each tutor and analyzes the common themes that emerged from this group of interviews. Finally, we will discuss our group's recommendations, based on this research, for GenAI use and policies in the UWC and at UVM.

Experiences with GenAI in the Writing Center

To determine the frequency of GenAI use in the UWC, we asked interviewees about their experiences with this technology. Tutors responded subjectively based on their sessions:

Tutor 1 reported not seeing much explicit use of GenAI in their time working with students. However, they also noted a significant increase in the general use of GenAI on campus over the past couple of years, with an overwhelming jump occurring within the past two semesters specifically.

Tutor 2 said they have seen a mix of positive and negative use of GenAI among students in the writing center, with some students disclosing that they have used GenAI as a tool while in other cases the tutor has inferred that GenAI was used. Despite the mixed frequency and ethicality of student GenAI use they've encountered, this tutor noted that they do not use GenAI as a tool in their leadership of sessions. Tutor 2 also described how many professors have a broad range of policies around GenAI use, which can make it difficult for tutors to know whether to support students' GenAI use. This tutor said they have chosen to act as a "passive observer" to student GenAI use, rather than attempting to police it.

Tutor 3's experiences with GenAI in the writing center have been minimal until now, as GenAI was very new in their first year of tutoring and they went abroad in the spring semester of last year. Since returning to the writing center this semester, they've noticed an obvious increase in GenAI use. They described how ChatGPT was framed as futuristic during their first year of tutoring but now it is used more in practice.

Tutor 4 has not had any experience with GenAI in the writing center. They reported having no sessions where the writer admitted to using GenAI or where it was blatantly obvious that AI was used. Although they have not encountered it in a tutoring session, Tutor 4 said they noticed a sharp increase in GenAI usage outside of the writing center. They described how their family and roommates have become increasingly open about using AI for both professional and academic purposes over the past couple of years.

Tutor 5 noted not having many experiences with student GenAI use in the UWC. However, they did note experience with instances in which they had seen students with ChatGPT open on their computer but were unable to infer whether or not it was being used for the assignment at hand.

Tutor 6 had a few experiences with GenAI in the writing center. They said two- or three-times students had come in with a piece of generated text with the hopes of making it sound not artificially generated. However, they said that usually writers were honest with their use of AI and that it was mostly used passively (for example to find synonyms for words or to fix grammar mistakes). Tutor 6 also noticed a significant increase in GenAI use in the past academic year.

The tutors interviewed in the group meeting had varying experiences with GenAI. One tutor described the most common use of GenAI being "passive",

meaning it was used to adjust grammar, spelling, and syntax. One tutor said that twice they'd had a writer who had a GenAI tab open in a session. One reported that twice they'd had a writer who came in with an outline for a paper written by ChatGPT asking for the tutor to help improve it.

Observed Trends in GenAI Use of Students

We additionally sought to determine the most common student uses of GenAI observed by tutors in the writing center. For tutors who had not had much experience with student GenAI use, some speculated based on trends they had observed outside of the writing center.

Due to the lack of experience with GenAI-generated student work in this context, **Tutor 1** was not able to speculate what types of assignments were most common for students to use this technology on. However, they had observed that younger students (e.g. freshmen) and students in lower-level classes such as ENGL 1001 seem to be more comfortable using GenAI in their academic work.

Tutor 2 has perceived an increase in GenAI use over their 3 years in the writing center as GenAI has become more popular. According to this tutor, students tend to use GenAI to brainstorm, to lengthen or condense their writing, or to "make their writing sound a certain way," likely with the goal of fitting a mainstream "academic" voice. Tutor 2 also noted that students often use GenAI as a thesaurus to substitute words in their writing, and that this can be problematic as the GenAI-suggested words often aren't a great fit. This tutor has observed the most GenAI use by students in STEM fields, as they more frequently seek to change their writing to fit scientific language, as well as using GenAI as a tool to summarize lengthy scientific literature and break down jargon.

When they've encountered students using GenAI in sessions, **Tutor 3** has perceived GenAI as a useful scaffolding technique. However, they worry that structuring a written piece is an important critical thinking skill and students may be losing out on this by using GenAI. This tutor noted that most students who use GenAI are freshmen or sophomores and speculated this is because they started using GenAI in high school, while other class years had already experienced college classes before GenAI gained popularity.

Since **Tutor 4** has not had experience with GenAI in the writing center, they couldn't speak to what demographics use it the most within that context. They did note that AI was frequently used as a tool in their computer programming classes. Tutor 4 also mentioned that many of their classmates admitted to using GenAI for translation purposes in their Chinese classes.

Tutor 5 has mostly seen first year students in introductory courses use Gen AI. They believe this is because older students had already learned writing skills prior to the advent of Gen AI to the public.

Tutor 6 had no opinions or observations regarding GenAI use in specific classes, majors, or years. Many tutors expressed GenAI being used passively by writers over the last two

semesters. Two separate tutors experienced a writer having a GenAI tool open in a tab during a tutoring session. The most common experience is writers using GenAI for grammar or spelling assistance. One tutor described two separate writers using GenAI to create an outline and coming into the writing center to make it better.

Attitudes of Writing Tutors Toward GenAI

To get a sense of the tutors' attitudes surrounding GenAI, we asked tutors about their current attitudes towards the technology, and how working in the UWC has changed this.

At the time of the interview, **Tutor 1** reported very strong negative feelings towards GenAI, and stated that apart from spelling and grammar services such as Grammarly, it has no place in academics. To this end, they noted that this technology limits important student engagement throughout the writing process. When asked if their time at the UWC had changed their attitudes towards GenAI, Tutor 1 reported that their negative opinions had intensified, but have become more nuanced through exploring more ethical uses for the technology.

Tutor 2 stated that, although it can be a useful tool, they worry about the extent to which GenAI is changing our writing, language, careers, and the way we seek information. In addition, they are concerned about the ethics of GenAI, both in terms of the absence of guidelines around its use and in terms of its environmental impacts. This tutor said that working in the writing center has given them numerous opportunities to observe how students are using GenAI and to analyze these uses in comparison to their "personal philosophy." While some of the GenAI uses they've seen have been creative, other students have been led to make careless mistakes or cut corners with the technology.

Tutor 3's personal attitudes towards GenAI are mixed: while they have used the technology as a tool, they are concerned that it allows students to avoid thinking critically. They stated that they are grateful they went through high school before the rise of GenAI, because it taught them how to write papers on their own and not "outsource for efficiency." They believe GenAI can be useful in small amounts for remedial tasks, but that often "the justifications fall short of the consequences."

This tutor also described the impact of working in the writing center on their attitudes about GenAI, saying that if they didn't work as a tutor, they would be more likely to support GenAI and use it frequently. However, their experiences in the writing center have shown them the value of working through challenges with another person and taking a writing project from start to end, rather than cutting corners with GenAI. They stated that using GenAI to avoid working through difficult writing robs the student of truly understanding their topic and their final piece. The high prevalence of GenAI use has led this tutor to feel uncertainty when reading students' writing, as they are not always sure whether the words are their own or come from a chatbot. As a result, they often aren't sure if students truly understand the topic they are writing about or if they have used GenAI.

Tutor 4 had a negative attitude towards GenAI overall. They echoed Tutor 3's sentiment that people are becoming too reliant on GenAI and may be losing valuable critical thinking skills. They acknowledged some instances where AI could be helpful, such as venting about relationship problems, but believe that GenAI should not be used in the classroom. They cited accommodation as one of the few instances where they considered its use permissible in an academic setting. This tutor said that discussions with fellow tutors about AI usage have increased their concerns about dependency and deepened pre-existing negative views.

Tutor 5 believes the academic environment is the last place GenAI should be. While it may be considered a starting point to brainstorm or outline, they believe it should only be used for menial tasks, such as gift ideas.

Tutor 6 believes that GenAI should be prohibited for writing assignments, and that it should also be excluded from research methods. They were aware of its uses and possible virtues but believed that the drawbacks outweighed any advantages. They believe that widespread endorsement of GenAI will lead to (or has already led to) a decrease in human connection, critical thinking skills, and the accumulation of new knowledge.

The tutors in the group meeting had a variety of opinions on GenAI use. There was a general consensus that GenAI should be used as a tool to help writers better develop their own ideas and convey them in an accessible way. Many felt that GenAI has a place in a non-academic setting, such as brainstorming recipes or itineraries. A handful of tutors felt that GenAI should not be used for any reason because of its disregard for intellectual ownership and its overwhelming environmental impact. There was one outlier who believed that GenAI is "the great equalizer" and should be embraced as a technological innovation to level the playing field, similar to how society felt about personal computers when they were first introduced to the public.

Tutors' Ethical Assessments of GenAI Use

To develop a better understanding of the tutors' ethical standpoints, we asked them whether they had personally used GenAI, and whether they believe it has a place outside of academic writing.

Tutor 1 reported using ChatGPT to find information on occasion and maintained that if it were more regulated and less harmful to the environment, GenAI could be useful for high-level idea synthesis outside of writing. However, in the context of the writing center, they did not see a place for it.

Tutor 2 has used GenAI as a tool to condense their writing, but aims to follow class guidelines, and also described running their own writing through GenAI out of curiosity to see how it might change. They have also used GenAI for personal purposes such as creating recipes, workout routines, and trip itineraries. When asked about their thoughts on the ethics of GenAI use, this tutor brought up how it is challenging or impossible to cite GenAI right now and said they wonder how this will change in the future. They feel conflicted about how to navigate this because, in their training as a tutor, they

had discussed how students might take a tutor's writing from a session and use that as their own, and they wondered how this would apply to GenAI.

In addition, this tutor worries about GenAI's water usage and effects on the climate, as well as being concerned about the use of algorithms in the place of human creativity. They brought up how many students use GenAI to make their writing better conform to a specific, mainstream "academic" voice, and wondered how this might impact our culture and standards of writing. They were interested to see whether our society's GenAI use will increase over time or whether we will "make a U-turn" towards human creativity.

Tutor 3 believes GenAI should be treated as one tool out of many that we can use for writing projects and noted that it's easy to become dependent on it or complacent. They stated that it's important to realize and remember that you do end up with a better-quality final piece when writing yourself rather than using GenAI, and that GenAI in reality doesn't give the writer "a better product for less work." Outside of academic work, this tutor has used GenAI to generate humorous images with friends but feels unsure of and nervous about the full capabilities of the technology. They described their belief that the US, and society in general, has been shortsighted in adopting GenAI technology so quickly without accounting for all of its future impacts and the quality loss that comes with it.

Tutor 4 acknowledged using GenAI a few times in an academic setting, but only in ways that were explicitly permitted by their professor. They described using GenAI as an outlining tool, but said they did not feel comfortable with the idea of claiming ownership over something written by AI. They believe that GenAI should not be used in the workplace, stating that if people are getting paid for a job, they should have the necessary skills without relying on GenAI.

Tutor 5 admitted to using Gen AI for menial tasks that were not related to academia. These tasks were mostly creative, and Gen AI gave them more time to focus on other tasks. Tutor 5 highlighted the difficulty in her personal use of GenAI in regard to academic integrity. They noted their strong ethical and moral qualms with GenAI, as it promotes seeking a certain grade rather than learning the material and fostering research skills. Tutor 5 feels extremely lucky to be in higher education and values learning. Using GenAI in academic writing thus feels like a waste of tuition money and time spent in school. In their tutoring experience, Tutor 5 has seen first year students in introductory courses use Gen AI the most, almost as a replacement for Google.

Tutor 5 further noted her difficulty determining how she ought to use GenAI given the differences in professors' standards. Some professors strictly prohibit the use of tools such as Chat GPT, while others encourage it to brainstorm ideas, create outlines, and revise papers. Without an institutional standard, Tutor 5 feels that students lack guidelines as to what "proper use" of Gen AI is in academia. If a standard were to be created, Tutor 5 believes that it should come from the Center for Student Conduct.

Tutor 6 said that they had used ChatGPT a few times early in its mainstream career. They specified that they had used it to create quizzes to study, but once they had read about the environmental impacts of AI technology, they decided it simply wasn't worth it. Tutor 6 thinks that GenAI is dangerous for the integrity of academic discourse, but also for the skills of the upcoming generation of scientists, politicians, and writers. This tutor also believes that policies on GenAI should be discipline-specific, and that the Writing Center has the right to take its own stance on the use of GenAI.

Out of the tutors in the group meeting, all but one said that they had used GenAI. Tutors described using it for various purposes, both academic and personal. Some of these purposes included the creation of recipes, writing prompts, study guides, summarizing documents, and brainstorming paper topics. The general opinion of the group was that GenAI isn't necessarily a detriment to learning, but rather that students don't have a cohesive understanding of how to use it properly.

Many also believe that it hinders critical thinking and creativity and undermines the value of peer-to-peer learning. There were many ethical concerns as well, such as concerns about the environment and the rights of artists and scholars to take ownership of their work. Many in the group hold the belief that the incoming classes are coming to college with lower baseline skills for writing because they are used to using GenAI as a crutch rather than a productive tool.

There was also a rather alarming idea that the upper class is pushing the use of GenAI to devalue intellectualization and thus remove power from the working class. Though that sentence sounds incredibly dystopian, it is increasingly apparent that it is not an impossible notion. Social and political impacts aside, the idea of erasing intellect in academia is a very real fear for the majority of the group.

Recommendations

From this investigation, we found that tutors had a wide variety of perspectives on GenAI use, both in and out of the writing center. While the prevailing sentiment towards GenAI use in the classroom was negative, some saw value in using it in non-academic contexts. In the tutor meeting, there were polarizing opinions on the use of GenAI. While all but one participant had used GenAI before, most believed it did not have a role in academia. There were a couple of exceptions to this, with some tutors believing AI use was permissible or even helpful in certain contexts where the professor explicitly allowed it. The meeting also revealed a myriad of ethical concerns that were reflected in the individual interviews, from environmental implications to potential job losses.

Based on this investigation, we at the UWC recommend that UVM sets a university-wide policy regarding GenAI. It has become apparent from our study that GenAI is not going anywhere, and if anything, its use will likely continue to increase. Current university guidelines are essentially non-existent, and professor guidelines are often vague. This leaves tutors in an awkward middle ground as to how best to advise writers on GenAI.

While the consensus from this investigation is that AI should not have a place on the college campus, we acknowledge that prohibiting it completely may not be realistic. Instead, UVM should provide clear limits on GenAI use. It is advisable that GenAI is explicitly banned in first-year writing classes to allow first-years to adapt to college-level writing without AI as a crutch. We believe that UVM addressing GenAI's potential as both a tool and a detriment is far more practical than waiting for a fade to obscurity that will not come to pass.

References

Annapureddy, R., Fornaroli, A., & Gatica-Perez, D. (2024). Generative AI literacy: Twelve defining competencies. *Digital Government: Research and Practice*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3685680

Akhtar, Z.B. (2024). Unveiling the Evolution of Generative AI (GAI): A Comprehensive and Investigative Analysis Toward LLM Models (2021–2024) and Beyond. *Journal of Electrical Systems and Inf Technology, 11*(22). https://doi.org/10.1186/s43067-024-00145-1.

Baron, N. S. (2023). Human Writers Meet the AI Language Sausage Machine. In *Stanford University Press*. Introduction, Stanford University Press. Retrieved February 25, 2025, from https://www.sup.org/books/literary-studies-and-literature/who-wrote/excerpt/prologue-excerpt.

Berreby, D. (2024, February 20). *The Growing Environmental Footprint of Generative AI*. Undark Magazine. https://undark.org/2024/02/20/ai-environmental-footprint/gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAoJCBhCSARIsAPhdfSgFpdRNWgPm2I26Jj1HbVfmEXFnGNRre3s5AXRIxm87ZED6dQjNNNkaAlfeEALw_wcB.

Bozkurt, A. (2024). GenAI et al.: Cocreation, Authorship, Ownership, Academic Ethics and Integrity in a Time of Generative AI. *Open Praxis*, *16*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.16.1.654

Cardon, P., Fleischmann, C., Aritz, J., Logemann, M., & Heidewald, J. (2023). The Challenges and Opportunities of AI-Assisted Writing: Developing AI Literacy for the AI Age. Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, 86(3), 257-295. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906231176517

Center for Excellence in Writing. (July 2024) *Teaching Writing with Generative AI*. Elon University. https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/writing-excellence/teaching-writing-with-generative-ai/.

Chen, X., Zou, D., Xie, H., Cheng, G., & Liu, C. (2022). Two decades of artificial intelligence in education: Contributors, collaborations, research topics, challenges, and future directions. *Educational Technology & Society*, *25*(1), 28–47. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647028

Evmenova, A.S., Regan, K., Mergen, R. et al. Improving Writing Feedback for Struggling Writers: Generative AI to the Rescue?. TechTrends 68, 790–802 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-024-00965-y

Haenlein, M., & Kaplan, A. (2019). A Brief History of Artificial Intelligence: On the Past, Present, and Future of Artificial Intelligence. *California Management Review*, *61*(4), 5-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619864925.

Kim, J., Yu, S., Detrick, R., & Li, N. (2024). Exploring students' perspectives on Generative AI-assisted academic writing. *Education and Information Technologies: The Official Journal of the IFIP Technical Committee on Education*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12878-7

Long, D. & Magerko, B. (2020). What is AI Literacy? Competencies and Design Considerations. *In Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. 1- 16. https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376727

Lukeš, D., Laurent, X., Pritchard, J., Sharpe, R., & Walker, C. (2023, October). *Beyond ChatGPT*. Www.ctl.ox.ac.uk. https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/beyond-chatgpt.

MIT Management. (2024). *When AI Gets It Wrong: Addressing AI Hallucinations and Bias*. MIT Sloan Teaching & Learning Technologies. https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/addressing-ai-hallucinations-and-bias/.

Smeds, M. R., Mendes, B., O'Banion, L. A., & Shalhub, S. (2023). Exploring the pros and cons of using artificial intelligence in manuscript preparation for scientific journals. *Journal of vascular surgery cases and innovative techniques*, *9*(2), 101163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvscit.2023.101163

Sullivan, M., Kelly, A., & McLaughlan, P. (2023). ChatGPT in higher education: Considerations for academic integrity and student learning. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 6*(1). https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2023.6.1.17

Sweetland Center for Writing. (n.d.) *Using Generative AI or Chatbots in the Writing Process*. University of Michigan. https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/instructors/guides-to-teaching-writing/genai-in-the-writing-process.html.

The Writing Center. (July 2023) *Generative AI in Academic Writing*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/generative-ai-in-academic-writing/

UNESCO, IRCAI. (2024). *Challenging systematic prejudices: an investigation into bias against women and girls in large language models*. Unesco.org. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971?posInSet=1&queryId=N-E.

Usdan, J., Pensky, A. C., & Chang, H. (2024). Generative AI's Impact on Graduate Student Writing Productivity and Quality. *SSRN*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4941022.

UT Southwestern Health Sciences Digital Library and Learning Center. (2025, February 28). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guide*. UT Southwestern Health Sciences Digital Library and Learning Center. https://utsouthwestern.libguides.com/artificial-intelligence.

UVM Writing Centers. (n.d.) *Understanding Generative Artificial Intelligence*. UVM. https://www.uvm.edu/writingcenters/undergradwriting/understanding-generative-artificial-intelligence.

Yang, S. J. H. (2021). Guest editorial: Precision education - a new challenge for AI in education. *Educational Technology & Society*, *24*(1), 105–108. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26977860

Zewe, A. (2025, January 17). *Explained: Generative AI's environmental impact*. MIT News | Massachusetts Institute of Technology. https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117.

Appendix: Scenarios and Scripts

In an article from *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, Perkins et. al (2024) recommend that alongside cohesive GenAI policy, providing example scripts and scenarios is crucial to equip tutors with the tools to build the confidence and flexibility needed to adapt to a changing academic landscape. This document details a few scenarios that could come up during a tutoring session concerning how and when to use GenAI tools such as ChatGPT. We at the Writing Center would prefer if students came in with assignments that didn't involve the use of GenAI, allowed or otherwise, for a multitude of reasons. However, that ideal situation is not our present reality. Many students come in with papers and assignments during which they've used AI to generate outlines, paragraphs, and even papers. Seeing as how those situations occur within the Writing Center, it is important to outline some potential scenarios. These are not all-inclusive, nor are they to be followed word for word; use them as guidance or inspiration for your next session. The scenarios detailed below are reference materials, meant to get you as a tutor thinking about what you'd say in a scenario similar to those below.

Scenario 1: A student wants to use GenAI on an assignment.

Tutor: Hey, what are we looking at today?

Writer: I've got a paper that I'm unsure how to start.

Tutor: Alright, well, what are some of the difficulties you're facing?

Writer: I understand the material, but I just struggle with getting the assignment started and sorting my ideas into paragraphs. So, I was considering using ChatGPT to start the process, but I'm on the fence.

Tutor: So, let's talk about AI. Firstly, do you know if you're allowed to use GenAI for this assignment or any assignment?

- See Scenario 3

Tutor: Okay, so after we find out whether you're allowed to use GenAI tools, we can continue discussing what AI means for your paper. First…

- If the student **is allowed** to use Generative AI
  - See Scenario 5
- If the student **is not allowed** to use Generative AI
  - See Scenario 5

Writer: Okay, so now that we know how and when I can use AI for this paper, I understand what the tool means for me. If I were to use AI in a paper, *how do I cite it*?

It is unlikely that a real session will go exactly as presented above. However, this script can act as a conversational framework. As a tutor working with someone who is using GenAI tools, getting as much information as possible about the writer's use of these tools is paramount. The other scenarios listed in this document and linked in this example conversation are narrower in scope. Much like dealing with emotionally charged sessions, it is important to be prepared with strategic "tools" in your tutoring toolkit that you can use when encountering a GenAI-constructed paper in the wild.

Scenario 2: Citing Generative AI

Writer: My professor wants us to use Generative AI for a project because we are studying how it works and how to use it confidently. Is there an established way to cite AI?

Tutor: Great question! Generative AI needs to be very explicitly cited in order for it to not be plagiarism. Do you know what citation style your professor is asking for in this particular assignment?

Writer: I think they want APA.

Tutor: Great! Do you know how you will be using AI in this assignment?

Writer: I think the professor wants us to directly quote the generated response and deconstruct the biases we find in it.

Tutor: Awesome! So, when citing GenAI, we quote it like a regular source. The format looks like this;

Parent Company. (year). Main Company (Mon. Day version) [Large language model]. URL.

So, in this case, it would be…

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (Mar. 24 version). [Large language model]. https://chatgpt.com/.

The in-text citation would look like this:

(OpenAI, 2025)

Does that make sense to you?

Writer: Yes, thanks! But how would I cite it if I want to incorporate the citation into the sentence before the quotation?

Tutor: That would be a narrative citation, which looks like this:

The text that was generated by **Open AI (2025)** was biased toward a future centered on technological advances: "(Quotation)."

Writer: Thank you!

Though Generative AI use may be frowned upon by the individual tutor, it is important to recognize that, in some situations, a student's success hinges on their ability to ethically and mindfully use the technology. Some professors assign projects such as the one described above to purposefully instill a sense of distrust in AI into their students. Preparing students to think critically about the bias and inaccuracy that may emerge in AI-generated responses and the possible implications of these issues can be an important way to ensure that they are able to make informed decisions about their GenAI use. Visit the UWC Generative AI Guideline here: go.uvm.edu/esal8

Scenario 3: How to tell if a professor allows Generative AI

Writer: I am very stressed about this essay and am worried about the deadline, so I used ChatGPT to supplement my work. I don't want to get in trouble with my professor, though. How can I tell if my professor allows the usage of Generative AI?

Tutor: "Let's look at your syllabus! Most professors include a list of academic integrity expectations for their classes and students, which means the answer is likely somewhere to be found there…"

- The professor has a strict No-GenAI policy

Tutor: "In this case, it looks like you aren't allowed to use GenAI. So instead of turning to ChatGPT, here are some other useful strategies and resources that will be useful to you now and in similar future scenarios."

- The professor allows full/supplemental usage of GenAI

Tutor: "It looks like your professor allows some usage of GenAI for this assignment. As a tutor, I'd love to try to support you and eliminate the need for ChatGPT, but I understand that what's done is done. So now, let's make sure you are using GenAI in a way that agrees with your professor's syllabus and supports you in the writing process…"

[Reference Scenario 5]

[Reference Scenario 2]

- The professor has little to no information on their GenAI policy

Tutor: "Let's draft an email to your professor politely asking them to elaborate on their GenAI policy so that we're certain of what is and isn't allowed. But in case they don't

respond in time for this assignment, let's err on the side of caution and stay away from GenAI."

Deciphering your professor's syllabus can be tricky, even without factoring in Generative AI. Currently, UVM does not have a policy on the usage of artificial intelligence engines like ChatGPT. This means that it is up to individual professors to regulate AI in their classrooms. AI policies are usually located in the professor's statement on their Class Expectations along with information on cheating and plagiarism. Because AI is still so new to us all, it's very important to follow the unique guidelines set out for you for each of your classes.

Scenario 4: What to do if you suspect a writer used GenAI to write their paper

Perhaps the writer's draft is full of commonly used AI phrases. Perhaps they left the ChatGPT tab open in the background. In any case, the writer has obviously used AI in some capacity to write for them.

Investigative approach

Tutor: How was the writing process for you? What did you find the easiest or the most difficult?

or

Why don't you summarize each of your paragraphs in a sentence or two so I can get a sense of your main idea?

or

Did you use any outside/other sources in the writing process?

or

The way this is written makes it sound a little AI-generated. Would you be interested in rewriting or rewording some parts of this so your professor doesn't think you used AI?

If the writer admits they used AI:

Tutor: Thanks for telling me. If you feel you need to use AI in some capacity for this assignment, let's check your professor's policy on AI (*see Scenario 3*). But for now, let's take this time to brainstorm and rewrite in your own words.

If the writer does not admit they used AI, try a more direct approach.

Direct approach

Tutor: It doesn't seem like this was written in your own words. I have to ask, did you use AI in some capacity for this assignment?

If the writer admits to using AI:

Tutor: While I don't know your professor's policy on using AI (*see Scenario 3*), I personally don't condone it, and I'd recommend rewriting. Why don't we start by summarizing what you want your main ideas to be, and we can expand from there.

or

Tutor: You will not be penalized by us at the Writing Center, and I'm not going to tattle to your professor, but I want to let you know it's fairly obvious this was not written by you. Did you use AI for this assignment?

If the writer says yes:

Tutor: This could possibly get you in some trouble with your professor, so why don't we spend this time writing this up in your own words?"

If the writer says no:

Tutor: I still would suggest rewriting in a voice that sounds more like your own. Let's think of some ways to rewrite this.

This is a tricky scenario to navigate, and there are a variety of responses you could have. This is mostly a personal choice—if you feel comfortable asking the writer outright if they used AI, you could opt for a more direct approach and suggest the writer do the writing themselves. This approach can be helpful, but it can also cause a writer to shut down, as they may feel they are "in trouble." If you're fairly certain the writer used AI but are not 100% sure, asking questions about the writing process or asking questions about the content/topic of the assignment can be helpful to gauge how much the writer actually knows and how much of the writing they did themselves. Ideally, the writer will use this as an opportunity to disclose that they used GenAI in some capacity, and you can suggest rewriting in their own words. A more direct approach may be necessary, though, if the writer is hesitant to admit to using AI in their work. It may be important to remind the writer that they will not "get in trouble" with the UWC for using AI but guiding them away from using it to write for them in the future.

Scenario 5: The student's professor encourages the use of Gen AI.

Writer: I'm not very confident in my writing, and my professor allows us to use AI. I want to use it to improve my essay but still have it be my own work. Can you help me with that?

If the tutor is not comfortable helping the student use AI:

Tutor: I don't feel comfortable assisting in using AI for writing assignments. If you would like, I can help you with this assignment without the use of AI, or I can connect you with a tutor who is comfortable using AI.

If the tutor is comfortable with using AI:

Tutor: "Ok! I'm here to help build your confidence in writing, but if you would still like to use AI, I can also help with that. In what capacity is Gen AI allowed, and how would you like to use it?"

Writer: Can you help me use AI to create an outline for my paper?

If the tutor does not feel comfortable with using GenAI:

Tutor: I can definitely help you brainstorm ideas and an outline for your paper, but I would recommend against using GenAI. You will learn a lot more and get more out of the assignment if you don't use AI. If you would still prefer to use GenAI, I would recommend connecting with another tutor.

If the tutor is comfortable using AI

Tutor: We can use ChatGPT to make an outline. We can put in your essay topic and thesis and ask it to formulate an outline to get you started. I still encourage you to use it as a model and not to just take it as it is.

Writer: Ok, can you show me how to do that?

Tutor: Of course! Let's start by looking at the outline to make sure everything looks correct. We will work to make sure everything is in your own words and incorporate your own ideas.

If the writer wants to use Gen AI to write their essay for them:

Writer: I'm really not confident, so I want to use AI to write my essay for me. Can you help me put it in my own words?"

Tutor: I would strongly recommend against using AI to write your entire essay. You will end up learning more if you write everything yourself. I am here to support your writing process, so if you have any questions on how to get started, I can help.

While it is unlikely that a student will come into the writing center with the goal of using Gen AI to write their entire paper, it is still likely that they will want to use it as a brainstorming tool or to help with the technical aspect of an assignment. Understand that if the student is present in the writing center, they are probably not utilizing AI out of laziness but due to a lack of confidence. Ensuring the writer that you are there to help and support them as a tutor may help build their confidence and discourage them from

using AI, even if their professor allows or even encourages it. In these scenarios, it is also important to understand how Gen AI resources such as Chat GPT work; it does not produce any new information, rather it draws on information that is already available. Because of this, it may not always be totally accurate. Teaching the writer how to fact-check AI is important to ensure that they are still using their own critical thought instead of relying on AI. If the writer is set on using AI, it is also important to encourage them to use it as a starting point and to show them how to put the content into their own words. Hopefully, by learning to use AI as a supplementary tool, rather than a crutch, the writer will build their confidence and will be less likely to use AI in the future.

*Contributors

Holly Painter, UVM Undergraduate Writing Center Interim Director
and Senior Lecturer of English

UVM Writing Center Student Tutors from English 2795:
Isa Armstrong
Cadoa Aukerman
Joe Bingham
Ellie Blackburn
Bonnie Blake
Ethan Brodie
Sam Clark
Chatham Courter
Willa Crowley
Wiley Delisa
Elena Gibbons
Katerina Jerine
Ayelet Kaminski
Noah Kirshenbaum
Jack McCormick
Dylan Moody Aness
Amanda Reinert
Caitlyn Schaefer
KJ Stiglitz
Liv Teare
Marcellus Walker
Mary Wallace
Laura Wargo
Emma Yarris
Bobby Zimmerman