

AI in the Writing Classroom: an Interview

The following interview was conducted by Rachel Cannon in early October 2023.



In a world where technology is continuously evolving, some educators have found they can use advancements to improve teaching and learning. In a recent conversation between Dr. Miller, English and Humanities Professor, and Rachel Cannon, Student Curriculum Specialist for the Teaching, Learning, & Professional Education Center, they discuss the use of artificial intelligence (AI). As the use of AI increases, conversations about the role of chatbot-driven AI, such as ChatGPT, are important.

Dr. Miller has integrated ChatGPT into his classroom instruction, using it to draft assignments. In the conversation, Dr. Miller highlights how he uses ChatGPT to assist in the creation of lesson outlines. The outlines help him find a starting point when planning and can lead to more in-depth learning experiences for students,

if ChatGPT is also used in student essay drafting. This AI-led brainstorming provides a foundation from which educators can further develop lessons and challenge students to engage in critical inquiry.

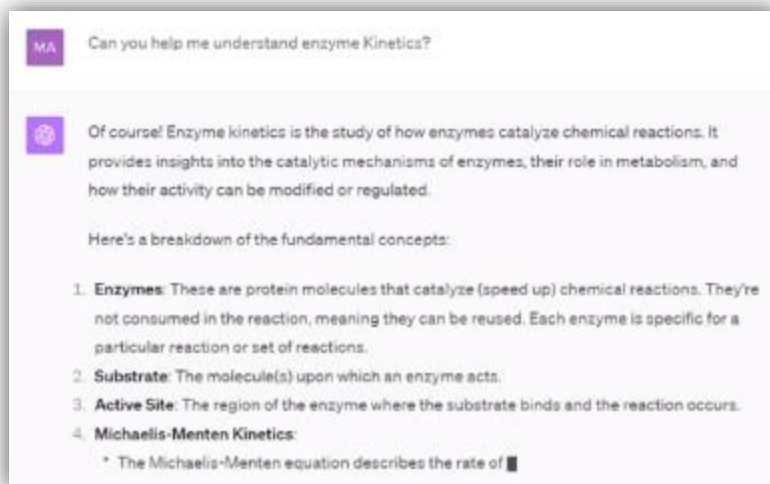
Rachel: What is one resource you would recommend to faculty who want to learn about ChatGPT?

Dr. Miller: A podcast called [The Cult of Pedagogy](#) by Jennifer Gonzalez.

[In the podcast, Gonzalez shares evidence-based ideas on assessment, classroom activities, as well as interviews educators, students, and administrators.]

Rachel: You mentioned that you have used ChatGPT to design several lessons. What did that process look like?

Dr. Miller: I've got an assignment, and I know what I want and what I have done in the past. And this is the trick, putting into the prompt enough information that you get back what you're looking for, as far as a draft. Then, asking [ChatGPT] more questions to get it to refine that draft and [finally] getting something that I refined—taking out things I don't want, and meeting certain things I'm after. It just becomes part of the drafting process.



Rachel: How do you feel about students ethically using ChatGPT?

Dr. Miller: So, here's what I told students in my Intro to College Writing class this morning. They are working on their first essay, and we discussed what topics they are starting with and what questions they will have to sort out. [I told them to] take what we've done and go use ChatGPT to find questions, ask questions, and see what it gives them to help them continue to think about that [topic].

[They can] see what resources are out there because [ChatGPT] is scouring everything up to September 2021. It will provide much more than they will get from Googling stuff. Do that and see what it gives you, and then refine it. It will provide you with some directions and things to work on; I tell them to be careful because it will give broken links and sources that aren't worth using, and you will have to evaluate that stuff, but use it as a tool.

Dr. Miller's integration of ChatGPT in lesson planning and class instruction demonstrates how AI can aid educational processes by providing educators and students with brainstorming and drafting.

This interview has been edited for clarity and concision by Brenda Lanphear.