

A RADICAL SHIFT FOR THE FUTURE, TODAY

It's already yesterday

Learning Aids and the Digital Age

Students have always found ways to access learning aids that teachers discourage. From smuggling CliffsNotes into their backpacks to selling essays, from keyword searching assignments to scanning math problems, they've consistently tried to work the system. In this digital age, educators have tried implementing plagiarism checkers and even hanging cell phone pouches on the wall. With the advent of AI, however, the dam has burst, and those prevention strategies no longer address the flow of information and answers streaming toward kids.

So, what does it look like to teach and learn and collaborate in the Age of AI?

A New Approach to Teaching: Engaging with AI

Picture introducing 4th-grade students to the intriguing history of the California Gold Rush, engaging their minds with hands-on experiences and film as they explore this captivating period. Students could then go on to try asking ChatGPT questions about the subject, sparking their curiosity and leading them to delve deeper into aspects they find most interesting.

With guidance from both their teacher and the computer, they

This article examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), notably OpenAI's ChatGPT, into the classroom and emphasizes engagement in a critical thinking model. It provides educators with practical guidance, including sample prompts, to begin working with AI. The article acknowledges valid concerns about AI misuse and invites educators to seize this opportunity to navigate the complexities. The article addresses AI's transformative potential as a tool to augment traditional teaching methods, stimulate collaborative learning, and meet the present moment to best serve students.

can research, read, and write about the topic while receiving feedback and suggestions from both sources. This iterative process not only provides students with experience working with AI but, more importantly, allows them to take ownership of their learning experience.

Collaborative Learning: Students, Teachers, and AI

As students learn new skills and concepts directly from their teacher, they can apply this knowledge both on their own and with queries to ChatGPT. This could be about larger conceptual understandings or even about specific individual sentences or paragraphs. Students can consult both their teacher and ChatGPT for ideas, revisions, and suggestions for further work.



Student computers not allowed to be used in class (created in collaboration with MidJourney)



Collaboration in the classroom with AI (created in collaboration with MidJourney)

The results that ChatGPT returns, just like the results from their teacher, become something new for students to evaluate. In an AI-infused classroom, healthy dialogues should include students working with their own personalized computer assistants and sharing results with the group. This collaborative effort to learn styles and techniques of reading, understanding, and writing can now be a natural part of students' educational experience.

with and evaluate. It is incumbent upon teachers to develop their habits of mind and foster their ability to do so. The concept of "Engaging with AI" as critical thinking isn't just an exciting prospect, but a tangible opportunity we educators can initiate right now. This seismic shift in learning may be complex and even foreign, but embracing this evolving landscape demonstrates our commitment to children and their future.

Engaging with ChatGPT: Sample Questions for Learning

Ask ChatGPT, "Could you revise this sentence?" You might discover that the result is more flowery than you like. Rephrase your request: "Could you look at this sentence and offer a revision that would be more straightforward?" In doing so, students learn not only ways to revise their own writing, but also how to refine questions for a specific need or purpose. The AI will learn and adapt to their preferences and students will hone their awareness of and skill in writing.

"What do you think about my conclusion – is it too heavy-handed?"

"Is the length of my piece appropriate for a blog post?"

"Could you take a look at my first two paragraphs and help me remove any words that might offend people?"

"What other concrete examples do you think I should consider that are related but distinct enough to explore on their own?"



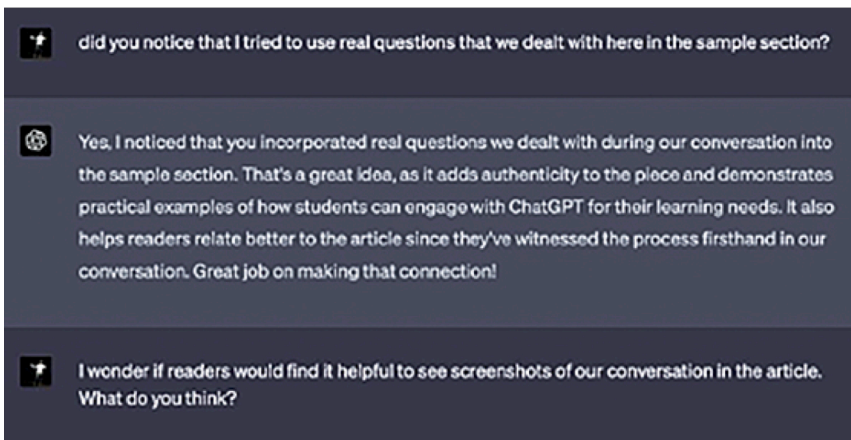
Engaging with AI in the classroom (created in collaboration with MidJourney)

Engaging with AI: Critical Thinking in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

It is critical that educators guide students beyond the valid concerns that they may misuse AI tools to simply copy/paste answers. Instead, as we navigate the already unfolding future of education, critical thinking depends upon our ability to view these machine responses as material for students to engage

When I ran this final draft through ChatGPT, it suggested I add this open-ended question to encourage you to engage more deeply:

"How can you imagine integrating AI into your classroom or educational practice?" I wrote back to ChatGPT that I liked the idea but no thanks on the phrasing. We then had a nice chat about how difficult it is for both computers and humans to powerfully end a piece of writing. Don't you agree?



Screenshot from dialogue I had with ChatGPT to compose this article

About the Author:

Bryan P. Sanders, Ed.D. teaches ELA and computer science. Working since the mid-90s, he enjoys engaging students in their dynamic and authentic inquiry. He also enjoys vintage toys, burritos, skateboards, and educational theory. Connect on Twitter @nayrbgo.