

Professors embrace artificial intelligence in the classroom “I use it as a thought-provoking, conversational tool.”

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Some professors at Arkansas State University are embracing AI and incorporating the technology in their classrooms and research.

Professors using AI in the classroom

Amy Moody-Qualls, an instructor of English, said she utilizes artificial intelligence for personal use as well as to benefit the courses she teaches such as composition, writing studies and digital literacy.

Moody-Qualls said she uses AI to caution her students and engage with them in thought exercises.

“I use it as a thought-provoking, conversational tool,” Moody-Qualls said. “I use it more as a cautionary tale by showing models of AI writing and even art occasionally to show students what it’s still lacking so they don’t try to use it as a replacement for their writing.”

The English instructor said she shows students how AI models like ChatGPT, an AI that generates text based on user-submitted prompts, can generate error-ridden writing and uses that as a teaching opportunity to stress the importance of learning how to write.

“Even if someone uses ChatGPT to write something, they need to be able to understand the mechanics and requirements of writing so they can see what mistakes ChatGPT are making,” Moody-Qualls said. “So if you’re not learning the writing process, then you’re not going to see the mistakes being made by AI.”

Cameron Wimpy, an associate professor and

department chair of political science, said he helps students in his research method classes learn programming skills through AI.

“I used to spend a lot of time trying to teach students who had no programming experience how to do basic programming,” Wimpy said. “Now, I can tell them, go use these tools that are available to you and it’s gonna teach you what you need to know about those basics.”

Wimpy said he also uses AI in his international relations class for students to brainstorm and develop ideas for assignments.

Kim Vickrey, professor of graphic design, said she uses generative AI in her classes to help students prototype their art. She uses Midjourney, an AI that generates images based on user prompts because its developers support artists and copyright laws.

“I show that to students before we jump into the AI tools, just to let them know that it is an ethical issue that you have to make a personal decision how you use it,” Vickrey said. “They are required in my class to give credit to the AI generative art software they use whenever they use it.”

Steve Gilland, instructor of computer science, said this is the first semester he has openly discussed using AI in his classes. Gilland said when presenting AI to his classes, specifically ChatGPT, he wanted his students to use it as a method of personal tutoring. He said it is important for students to get answers quickly, especially in coding.

“You can spend hours upon hours on a particular piece of code and it just never makes sense to you,” Gilland said. “Until somebody comes along and is like, ‘Oh, you missed a semicolon there.’”

The computer science instructor said ChatGPT is good for quickly providing answers to simple questions. He said students who efficiently utilize ChatGPT through specific but concise phrasing can also get help with more complex coding questions.

Deepak Joshi, assistant professor of remote sensing and precision agriculture, said he encourages his students to use AI in their coursework. He said students need to become accustomed to new technologies like AI so they stay up-to-date in their industries and get better jobs. He said more job and academic opportunities exist for people who can effectively use AI.

Gilland and Moody-Qualls said A-State has allowed them to use AI in their courses. Moody-Qualls said she feels like she has a lot of creative freedom in how she uses AI in the classroom. Gilland said A-State is hands-off and did not advise either way regarding how he should use AI in his classes.

Professors using AI outside the classroom

Andrea Junqueira, assistant professor of political science, said she does not use AI in the courses she teaches, but she does use AI in her research processing political ad data sets.

“I have close to 1,000 hours of political ads and to process that you can’t really do it manually because we’re talking about thousands of hours of videos,” Junqueira said. “In order to process all of those videos, I use some strategies that rely on things that could be considered AI.”

Junqueira said she is training an algorithm to gather information from political ads by analyzing each ad frame-by-frame.

AI for Education

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS: SHOULD I USE AI?

Why do you want to use an AI Chatbot? I want it to...

- HELP ME GET STARTED ON AN ASSIGNMENT
- HELP ME IMPROVE ON WHAT I'VE ALREADY DONE
- EXPLAIN AN IDEA IN SIMPLER TERMS OR IN A DIFFERENT WAY
- FULLY COMPLETE AN ASSIGNMENT FOR ME
- HELP WITH MY RESEARCH AND FIND FACTS, QUOTES OR RESOURCES

YES

ASK MY TEACHER AND CHECK MY HANDBOOK TO ENSURE THAT IT IS ACCEPTABLE

USE AN APPROPRIATE AI TOOL AND TRACK YOUR WORK

DOUBLE CHECK YOUR WORK FOR HALLUCINATIONS AND BIAS

CITE THE AI TOOL YOU HAVE USED IN YOUR FINAL PRODUCT

NO

IF AI IS DOING THE WORK FOR YOU, YOU'RE MISSING THE LEARNING - TRY ANOTHER APPROACH

AI CHATBOTS OFTEN HALLUCINATE WHEN DOING THIS TYPE OF RESEARCH

KEY VOCABULARY

HALLUCINATION:
When Gen AI tools provide incorrect or made up information.

BIAS:
Gen AI Tools are trained on data from the internet which is not always fair or balanced.

CITING AI:
When citing AI, provide the name of the tool you have used and the date utilized.

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GRAPHIC COURTESY AIFOREUCATION

Gilland said he uses AI like ChatGPT to generate questions and tests for his classes. He said before using ChatGPT, creating and proofreading a single test could take him an entire day. “I’ve since cut that down significantly by letting things

like ChatGPT generate those for me,” Gilland said. “Still, obviously, reading over it, making sure those are correct.”

Joshi said he uses AI in crop monitoring and research. He said before teaching at A-State, he used AI to determine

carbon footprint and predict greenhouse gas emissions from cover crops in South Dakota.

CONTINUED:
AI CLASSROOM, 4A

Access & Accommodations (AAS) uses assistive technology to accommodate students



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Tori Shann, alternative text and access coordinator, said any student with a diagnosed disability can check out assistive technology devices.

“I know a lot of student population we see get kind of turned away when they hear that. But, it can be anything ranging from physical mobility issues, ADHD, autism or dyslexia. There’s a wide array of different reasons a student could qualify for our services,” Shann said.

AAS can lend technology such as laptops and iPads to students, as well as other less common devices.

“We have Livescribe pens, which is kind of like a recorder built into a pen. We’ve got just your old typical recorders. We have a thing called a Language Master, it’s kind of like a digital dictionary. That’s really cool. We also have C-pens, and OCR pens, which will scan text and read it out loud to students that may have dyslexia or reading comprehension issues,” Shann said.

They said assistive technology can also include low-tech communication boards made of cardboard or felt cutouts, or higher-tech speech-to-text and text-to-speech devices.

They said assistive technology helps create equal access for everyone.

“You never really understand the full impact a disability can have on someone’s life and all the things that they can struggle with because of that. Technology, especially nowadays, helps someone with ADHD, all the technology with reminders and all those things you can set on your phone. We’ve got students with little to no vision (who use) screen readers, that way they can still access the computer and they can still be a part of today’s society,” Shann said.

Brief by Caroline Averitt | Life Editor

Can Canvas tell if you’ve used AI?

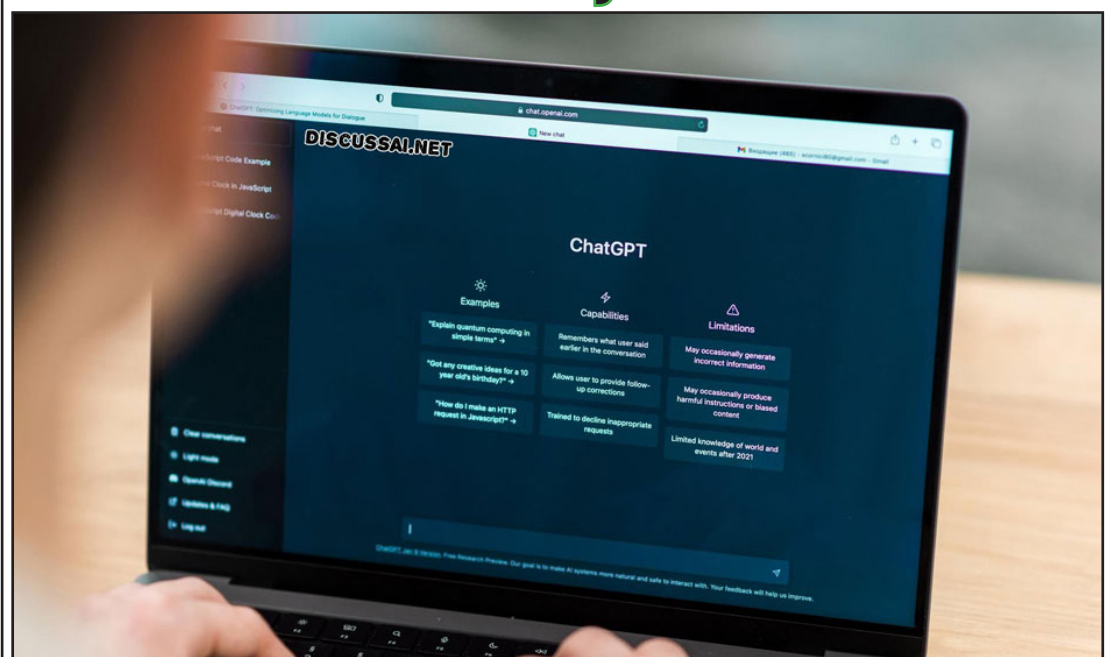


PHOTO COURTESY OF DISCUSSAI

Canvas has certain tools in place to detect plagiarism involving artificial intelligence.

While giving an exam, Canvas records all student activities. This includes but is not limited to mouse clicks, keystrokes, time spent on questions and more. For example, too fast of a response time could indicate cheating or AI use on an exam.

When it comes to written assignments, Canvas does not have any tools that can detect AI writing. However, it does allow for professors to install third-party plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin, Copyleaks and more.

Arkansas State University’s student handbook says if AI is to be used in an assignment, it should first be approved by the instructor. In addition, any AI usage must be appropriately cited, such as through a footnote, endnote, bibliography, etc.

Brief by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief