AI–Educator Collaboration in Critical Reading and Writing Pedagogy

Course: WP1010 Introduction to Academic Writing
Semester: Fall 2024
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(Disclaimer: Organized and structured in collaboration with Chat GPT)

In an educational climate shaped by digital acceleration, information fatigue, and increasing demands on faculty and students alike, our challenge is to create learning experiences that are adaptive, intentional, and transformative.

Rather than view generative AI as a threat to student thinking, I chose to explore what happens when AI becomes a design partner in our pedagogical toolkit.

By using AI to co-develop writing prompts, model feedback scaffolds, and build reflection-based assignments, I found that:

- Students lingered longer in complexity
- Their arguments became more layered and reflective
- Critical thinking was supported—not replaced—by intelligent design

This handout offers examples of two classroom-tested assignments where generative AI and human teaching worked in harmony to enhance students' engagement with texts, arguments, and their own ideas.

Assignment 1: Comparison-Contrast Paper (600–700 words)

Goal: Move students beyond summarizing into analysis, synthesis, and comparative critique.

Source 1: Qiang Zha (2020)

"How Should Liberal Arts Education Evolve in the Twenty-First Century?"

Summary: Zha advocates for a reform of Chinese higher education that blends Western liberal arts with Chinese traditions. He emphasizes interdisciplinary thinking, holistic development, and global-local responsiveness.

Guiding Questions:

- How does Zha define the role of humanities education in the 21st century, especially in Chinese universities?
- What balance does Zha propose between Western and Chinese models?
- How does interdisciplinary learning prepare students for global challenges, according to Zha?
- What specific educational reforms does he propose?
- How does his model contrast with competency-based approaches?

"Global Competences and 21st Century Higher Education and Why They Matter"

Summary: Robertson calls for education that centers global competencies—intercultural skills, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility—in response to global inequalities.

Guiding Questions:

- How does Robertson define 'global competencies'?
- What transition does she suggest from discipline-based to competency-based education?
- What role should universities play in global citizenship and ethics?
- How does she connect competencies to global challenges like inequality or climate change?
- What educational reforms does she suggest, and how do they compare with Zha's?

Comparative Task
Prompt: Identify points of convergence and divergence between Zha and Robertson. How do their visions of future education align or differ in cultural, ethical, and practical dimensions.

Outcome: These prompts, co-curated with AI, supported deeper student analysis and fostered a capacity for nuance and productive disagreement.

Assignment 2: Critical Response Paper (800–900 words, 3–4 sources)
Goal: Support students in crafting a positioned argument through guided exploration of ideas.

Anchor Text: Henry Giroux – "Translating the Future"
Summary: Giroux urges young people to "imagine the unimaginable," calling education a democratic act of resistance, imagination, and hope.

Guiding Questions:

- Imagination and Action

  - How does Giroux link imagination to real-world change?
  - How does envisioning futures challenge current systems?

- Role of Youth in Democracy

  - What does it mean to question assumptions in a democracy?
  - How does Giroux propose hope as a strategy for resilience?

- Critique of Modern Society

  - What are 'manufactured cynicism' and 'moral despair'?
  - Can you find real-world media examples that reinforce or resist these ideas?

- Application to Education

  - How well do today's institutions prepare students for the civic role Giroux envisions?

Supporting Texts

Bono – "Because We Can, We Must"

- How does Bono's idea of global responsibility align with Giroux's civic urgency?
- How does Bono use storytelling as activism?
- Do you see a connection between Bono's emphasis on personal accountability and Giroux's civic leadership?
- How does Bono use his platform as an artist to inspire action, and how does this align or differ from Giroux's view?

David Foster Wallace – "This is Water"

- How does Wallace's idea of 'choosing what to think' echo Giroux's vision of critical thought?
- How does Wallace frame education's role in empathy and awareness?
- How does Wallace's critique of cynicism compare with Giroux's?

Final Task: Critical Response

Prompt: Articulate your stance toward Giroux's claim that "everything is possible" if we "imagine the unimaginable." Support your view through evidence, comparison, and reflection.

AI's Role: In this assignment, AI helped develop guiding questions that nudged students toward deeper reading and conceptual synthesis. Students were unaware of AI's role until after submission—making their engagement with complexity all the more genuine.

Summary Takeaways

- Ethical Design: AI doesn't give answers—it helps craft the right questions.
- Deeper Thinking: Prompts invited nuance, ambiguity, and interpretive risk.
- Student-Centered: The design scaffolded their meaning-making process.
- Faculty-Guided: Human oversight framed the learning, offered feedback, and ensured relevance.