



Connors Writing Center

AI Literacy Info Session

Understanding artificial intelligence concepts and practical applications

Session Main Points

AI in Writing Process: Friend or Foe?

Explore AI's capabilities and limitations in academic writing, highlighting ethical and unethical case studies.

Keeping Your Voice: Using AI without Losing Yourself

Focus on preserving personal voice by understanding your own signature preferences for writing vs AI-generated content.

Fact-Check the Bot: Critical Thinking in the Age of AI

Verify AI outputs and recognize hallucinations and biases.

AI Literacy 101: What Every Student Should Know

What are AI risks, opportunities, and university policies.

From Prompt to Product: Using AI for Revision

Tips for prompt engineering and AI's role in enhancing clarity and structure during revision.

**Key points will be repeated multiple times throughout this presentation*

How does A.I. work?

- **Training on Data**

The AI is trained on massive datasets (books, websites, images, etc.) to learn patterns in language, visuals, and structure.

- **Learning Patterns**

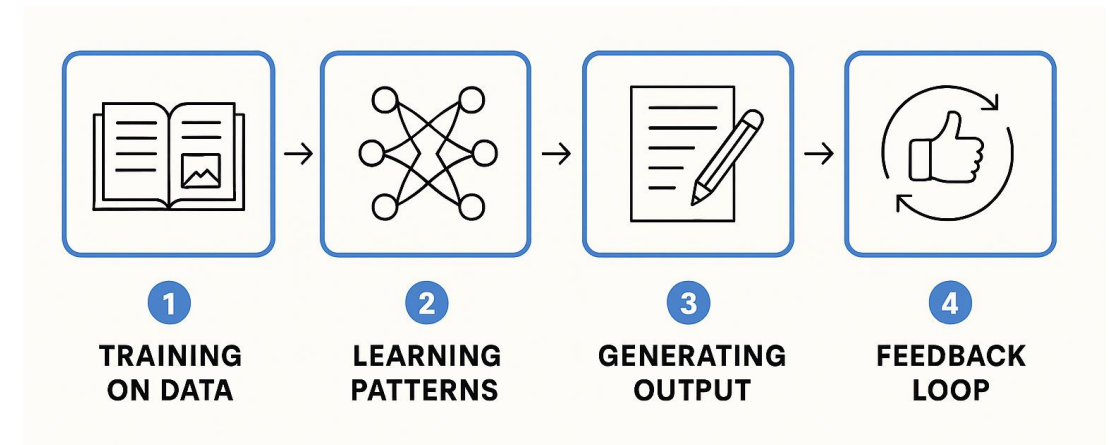
It doesn't memorize content—it learns how things *typically* look or sound, like how sentences flow or what a cat looks like. It works similarly to predictive text.

- **Generating Output**

When you give it a prompt, it uses what it learned to generate something that fits the request—like writing an email or designing a logo.

- **Feedback Loop**

Some models improve over time by learning from user feedback or additional training.



What can A.I. do?

- **Support Brainstorming**
Help generate ideas, outlines, and topic suggestions for papers or projects.
- **Explain Concepts**
Clarify difficult topics, summarize readings, or offer alternative explanations.
- **Assist with Language and Style**
Suggest ways to improve clarity, tone, or grammar—but not replace the deeper learning that comes from working with a writing center consultant.
- **Translate and Reword**
Assist with translating text or paraphrasing for better understanding.
- **Generate Practice Questions**
Create sample quizzes or flashcards to help you study.
- **Assist with Coding and Math**
Offer guidance on programming problems or walk through math solutions.
- **Organize Information**
Help structure notes, create summaries, or build study guides.

 **Reminder:** Using AI to write essays, complete assignments, or submit work as your own violates academic integrity policies. Always use AI as a *learning tool*, not a *substitute for your own work*—and when in doubt, consult your Writing Center!

A variety of Gen AI software

Best for Research & Fact-Based Queries: Perplexity AI

- **Strengths:** Real-time web search with source citations; excellent for academic, news, and technical research.
- **Features:** Multi-turn conversations, focus modes (e.g., academic, Reddit, YouTube), and source transparency.
- **Limitations:** Less creative than Claude or ChatGPT; not ideal for fiction or brainstorming.
- **Best For:** Students, researchers, journalists, and professionals needing reliable, cited information.

Best All-Around Generalist: GPT-4 / GPT-5 (OpenAI)

- **Strengths:** Versatile across writing, coding, tutoring, and brainstorming. Strong in natural language generation and multimodal tasks.
- **Use Cases:** Blog writing, customer support, code generation, tutoring, and idea generation.
- **Best For:** General users, educators, marketers, and developers.

Best for Visual Creativity: Midjourney & DALL·E 3

- **Midjourney:** Artistic, abstract image generation—great for concept art, posters, and branding.
- **DALL·E 3:** Realistic image generation from text prompts—ideal for ads, presentations, and design.

Best for Video Creation: Synthesia

- **Strengths:** AI avatars for professional video creation from scripts.
- **Use Cases:** Training videos, product demos, educational content.

Best for Marketing & Copywriting: Jasper AI & Copy.ai

- **Jasper:** Tailored for brand-consistent marketing content.
- **Copy.ai:** Fast generation of ad copy, emails, and social media posts.

Best for Coding:

- **GPT-5** – Highest benchmark score for code generation.
- **Gemini 2.5 Pro** – Fast and accurate, with strong integration into Google's ecosystem.
- **Claude 3.7 Sonnet** – Best for code explanation and debugging.

Best for Data Analysis & Visualization: Claude 3.7

- Can clean datasets, generate dashboards, and create infographics from prompts.

What can A.I. NOT do?

- **Doesn't Think or Understand**

It generates based on patterns—not real comprehension or reasoning.

- **Can Be Wrong or Misleading**

It may confidently produce inaccurate or outdated information.

- **Lacks Common Sense**

It doesn't "know" the world like humans do and can make illogical or absurd claims.

- **No Real-Time Awareness**

Most do not know current events unless specifically updated or connected to live data. The exception being some newer paid models like GPT5 or Gemini.

- **Biased by Training Data**

If the data it was trained on has biases, the output might reflect them.

- **Doesn't Have Intentions or Emotions**

It doesn't feel, want, or believe anything—it's just predicting what comes next.

- **Limited in Specialized Knowledge**

It may struggle with niche topics or highly technical fields without proper context.

Ethical Concerns with AI

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Submitting AI-generated work without credit breaches academic ethics and integrity.

Loss of Student Voice

Overusing AI can dilute a student's personal perspective in academic work.

Bias and Inaccuracy Risks

AI outputs may contain bias and errors, requiring careful evaluation by users.

Transparency and Disclosure

Students must openly disclose use of AI in their academic writing processes.

Data Privacy Concerns

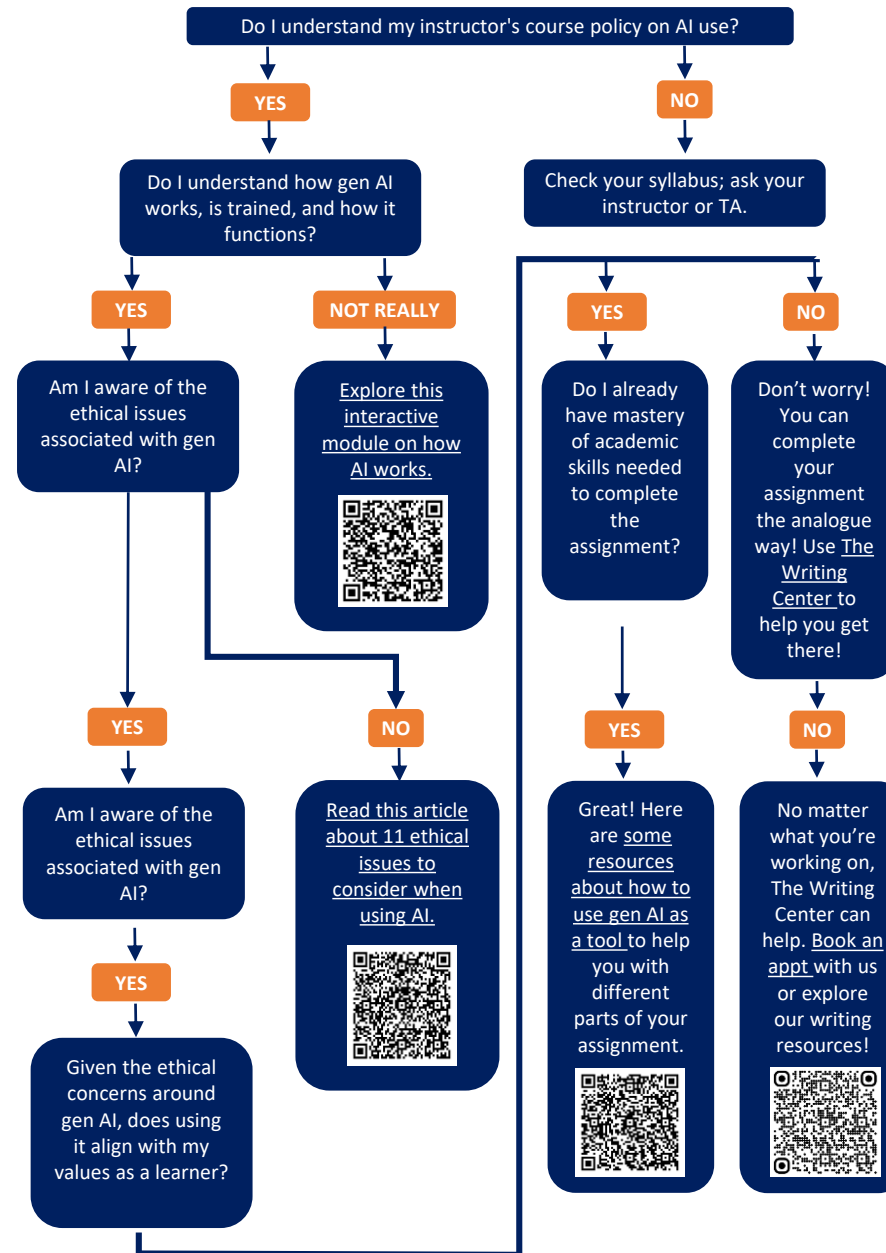
Sensitive information input into AI tools raises significant data privacy issues.

Environmental Impact

AI's high energy usage and carbon emissions raise important sustainability concerns.

AI Decision Tree:

Should I use Gen AI for my assignment?



Available as a PDF handout on our website

Guiding Principles for AI Use

AI as Thinking Partner, Not a Ghost Writer

Encourage AI use for idea generation and structure help while maintaining student's unique voice.

Transparency and Attribution

Students should document AI use like traditional citations to uphold academic integrity.

Critical Engagement with AI Outputs

Promote questioning AI output accuracy, bias, and relevance for deeper critical thinking.

- **Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism When Using AI**

- **Never submit AI-generated content as your own work.**
Use it to support your thinking, not replace it.
- **Always cite sources—even if AI helped you find them.**
If AI suggests a quote or reference, verify it and cite properly.
- **Use AI to guide revision, not to rewrite.**
Ask for suggestions, then make your own changes.
- **Keep track of what came from you vs. what came from AI.**
Maintain transparency in your process.
- **Consult your instructor or Writing Center if unsure.**
When in doubt, ask about appropriate use.
- **Review the [UNH academic integrity policy](#).**
Know the rules before using AI in your coursework.



Show Your Work

- **The Writing PROCESS is your friend.** Document different stages of your process.
- **Save distinct drafts and version histories.** Google docs has version histories, as does Grammarly Authorship, or you can save individual Word doc drafts to your hard drive or OneDrive.
- **Check in with your instructor** throughout your process. Demonstrate to them you're working toward the end goal. Office hours are a great opportunity to show them where you are and ask any questions you might have.
- **Attribute any output you use from AI.** Citation guidelines can be found on the Purdue OWL's website: <https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/c.php?g=1371380&p=10135074>



What is "VOICE" and how do I maintain mine?

Example 1 (WikiHow style): "Pour 6 ounces of water into the coffee maker reservoir. Add 2 tablespoons of ground coffee to the filter. Press the brew button. Wait 4-5 minutes for brewing to complete. Pour coffee into mug and serve immediately."

Example 2 (Lily Wong/conflicted identity style): "I use Folgers instant. There, I said it. My Vietnamese grandmother, who roasts her own beans and makes cà phê sữa đá with the patience of a meditation master, doesn't know this about me. Every morning I desecrate the family legacy with my hot water and brown powder, telling myself it's just easier this way—but really, I think I'm terrified of never making it as perfectly as she does."

Example 3 (Anne Lamott/neurotic honesty style): "Here's what actually happens when I make coffee: I stand at the counter having a complete existential crisis about whether I deserve caffeine. Did I accomplish enough yesterday? Am I a fraud who's just pretending to need coffee like real adults? By the time I'm done spiraling, the coffee's gone cold and I drink it anyway as punishment."

Example 4 (Paul Ford/zen philosopher style): "When you make coffee for someone else, you are saying: 'I want you to feel more alive.' This is why I make coffee every morning for my wife, who doesn't even drink it. She pours it out when I leave. We both know this. The ritual continues. This is love."

What creates "VOICE"?

Word choices (Folgers vs. ethically-sourced)

Emotional honesty (spiral thinking vs. instructions)

Cultural/personal details

Attitude toward reader

Sentence rhythm

Why is voice important?

1. Imagine you are applying for a job. Pretty simple, straightforward writing, a job application. So you turn to GenAI to write your cover letter for you. Now, understanding that AI isn't perfect, you do go in and make a few changes. You adjust a sentence here and a sentence there. You submit.
2. But the thing is, the other 50 applicants all did exactly the same thing. Like you, tweaked a sentence here and a sentence there. Submitted.
3. And now the company has 50 cover letters, all a little different, sure, but none of them distinctive.

At its very best case future scenario, AI is going to be able to do about 90 percent of the work of writing for us. But that last 10 percent? That's the hardest 10 percent, the part that takes the most work. And that's voice work, the work of turning it into something that sounds distinctive and human and YOU. And someone who understands their own voice and can put in that very difficult work - that person is going to write the cover letter that stands out.

What is MY voice?

Create Your Voice Profile/Recipe"

1. Formal $\leftrightarrow$ Casual
2. Serious $\leftrightarrow$ Playful
3. Expert $\leftrightarrow$ Fellow learner
4. Detached $\leftrightarrow$ Personal

"My voice recipe is: ____ parts [adjective] + ____ parts [adjective]"

(Examples: "3 parts patient + 1 part sarcastic" or "Equal parts enthusiastic and nerdy")

Key takeaway: Consistency doesn't mean boring. Your voice can shift in intensity but should always be recognizably yours.

Prompt Engineering Tips

- **Be specific.** The more specific you are, the better the output. Identify the structure and type of language you're looking for.
- **Identify your audience.** Tell AI to whom you are writing and what your purpose is for the readers.
- **Clarify a style.** If you don't want flowery language with a lot of adverbs, or if you wish the AI to only use passive voice, etc., make sure to indicate these preferences in your prompt.
- **Ask for revisions.** If you don't like the AI's output, ask it to make modifications and try again. Get more specific.
- **Recognize when it has reached its limits.** Sometimes you know better about what you want and create it better than what AI can do. Trying out ideas with AI can help you articulate what, in the end, is something you want to be able to produce.
- In the end, **YOU ARE THE WRITER.** You get to make the final choices.

How / when to use AI depending on where you are in your writing process

Early Stages:

- **Brainstorming**
 - *Example:* “Give me 5 possible angles for an essay on climate change and policy.”
- **Asking for general topic ideas**
 - *Example:* “What are some current debates in education I could write about?”
- **Asking for key search terms when doing research**
 - *Example:* “What keywords should I use to research the impact of social media on mental health?”
- **Asking questions to guide your inquiry or focus your thesis**
 - *Example 1:* “Can you help me turn this general idea—*college tuition is too expensive*—into a more focused thesis statement?”
 - *Example 2:* “My thesis is: *Climate change policy needs to prioritize environmental justice*. Can you suggest ways to make this more specific or nuanced?”
- **Exploring different angles or perspectives on a topic**
 - *Example:* “What are opposing viewpoints on universal basic income?”

How / when to use AI depending on where you are in your writing process

Middle Stages:

- **Organizing your work or outlining steps to meet writing goals**
Example: “Help me create a writing plan for a 5-page argumentative essay.”
- **Multilingual learners modifying writing to match college-level English conventions**
Example: “Can you help me rephrase this sentence to sound more academic?”
- **Clarifying unfamiliar terms or concepts**
Example: “What does ‘epistemology’ mean in simple terms?”
- **Identifying gaps in argument or evidence**
Example: “Does this paragraph need more support for my claim?”

How / when to use AI depending on where you are in your writing process

Late Stages:

- Ask AI to help you create a checklist for final review (e.g., citations, formatting, transitions)
- **Avoid pasting your full paper into AI tools**
Instead: Use tools like Grammarly for grammar and mechanical checks.
- **Targeted mechanical and grammatical support**
Ask to identify proofreading/editing choices you might make (rather than having it make the changes for you). This provides you with identifiable places for making your own changes, rather than blindly accepting AI's edits.
Example: “Here’s a paragraph I’m struggling with—can you point out grammar issues I should fix?”
- **Understanding feedback from instructors or TAs**
Example: “What does ‘awkward phrasing’ mean and how can I fix it?”
- **Creating a final review checklist**
Example: “What should I check before submitting my final draft?”

Writing Center's Role in AI Literacy

Default Policy

We defer to instructor policy first and foremost.

AI Literacy Support

Tutors assist students in understanding AI applications in writing and promote ethical AI use and citation practices. **We do not copy/paste anything into or out of AI. Instead, we use it as a springboard for discussion.**

Dialogue and Reflection

Engaging students in dialogue fosters deeper learning, reflection, and revision in their writing process.

Skill Development

The center develops lifelong skills such as argumentation, organization, and critical evaluation of AI outputs.

Human-Centered Support

Support includes boosting confidence, motivation, and personal growth, providing a human touch beyond AI capabilities.



Why Visit the Writing Center in the Age of AI?



AI Can't Replace Human Understanding: AI can generate text, but it doesn't understand your assignment, your professor's expectations, or your unique VOICE the way a human writing assistant can.



You Need a Thought Partner, Not Just a Tool: AI can suggest ideas, but it can't ask you the right questions to push your thinking forward. Writing Assistants engage in dialogue to deepen your learning.



Ethical Guidance and Accountability: It's easy to cross ethical lines with AI without realizing it. The Writing Center helps you use AI responsibly and maintain academic integrity.



AI Is a Tool - We Help You Use It Well: Knowing how to use AI effectively is a skill and we can help you build it. Learn how to prompt, evaluate, and integrate AI into your writing.



Human Feedback Builds Lifelong Skills: AI might help you finish a paper, but it won't help you grow as a writer. Writing Assistants help you develop skills like argumentation and revision.



We Support the Whole Writer, Not Just the Writing: We are here to support your confidence, motivation, and growth, not just your grammar. The Writing Center is a space for encouragement and collaboration.

Writing with A.I.

Join the Connors Writing Center to learn about Writing with/without GenA.I.

A.I. LITERACY

How does AI. work?
What can A.I. do?
What can't it do?
Limitations
Ethical considerations
Prompt Engineering tips

RESPONSIBLE USE

When can you use it?
What stage of the writing process is it most appropriate?
How do you keep your own voice?
How do you cite it?

SESSION DATES & TIMES

Tues Sept 16 @1-2pm
Tues Oct 21 @1-2pm
Tues Dec 2 @1-2pm

Dimond Library 329

RESOURCES

See our webpage on Writing Resources



CALL US

603-862-3272



EMAIL US

writing.center@unh.edu



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