



University
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AI Symposium

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Room 745 James McCune Smith Learning Hub

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Integrating Generative AI in the EAP Curriculum

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Background

What/Who? How the integration of Generative AI in an EAP writing class can strengthen students' critical digital literacy skills.

How? Classroom Activities, Focus Groups, Observations, Interviews.

Why? I am interested to learn to what extent and in what ways can the integration of Generative AI in the EAP writing class strengthen students' critical digital literacy skills? I want to understand:

- What are the EAP students' experiences and perceptions of Generative AI?
- How do the students use Generative AI to support their academic writing?
- How and to what extent can the strengthening of critical digital literacy skills support student academic writing needs?

Context and Rationale

AI is changing the nature of academic work globally creating challenges for teachers mainly related to “its potential for academic dishonesty” (Jones, 2023, np). In terms of teaching EAP, the biggest challenges are:

- **How to assess** students’ work without knowing whether a piece of text was written by a student or a digital tool?
- **How to detect** the author and how to prevent malpractice including malpractice caused by using AI?
- **How to ensure academic integrity** that AI may threaten?
- **How can teachers teach academic writing** and argumentation and assess their understanding of the course if ChatGPT can give them all the answers?

Literature

Artificial intelligence is changing the nature of work and requiring practitioners to be ever more inventive and digitally creative. The skills that are now needed – ‘21st-century skills’ such as creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, communication, collaboration, ethical judgement, and digital literacy – are all deeply connected with critical thinking. (Wilson, 2019, p.4).

It is of great importance to enable students to “confidently use Generative AI effectively, ethically and critically in context and consider the social value of meaningful authentic assessment” (McArthur, 2023, p.85).

*Payton (2012, p.2) believes that instead of adopting new digital tools the focus should shift to the ‘meaningful tasks’ used that investigate “*authentic academic digital practices that can be incorporated in the curriculum and how to recontextualise these new practices in academia*”.*

Research Design

In my project, I **integrated Generative AI into my EAP classroom**, specifically in academic writing activities to:

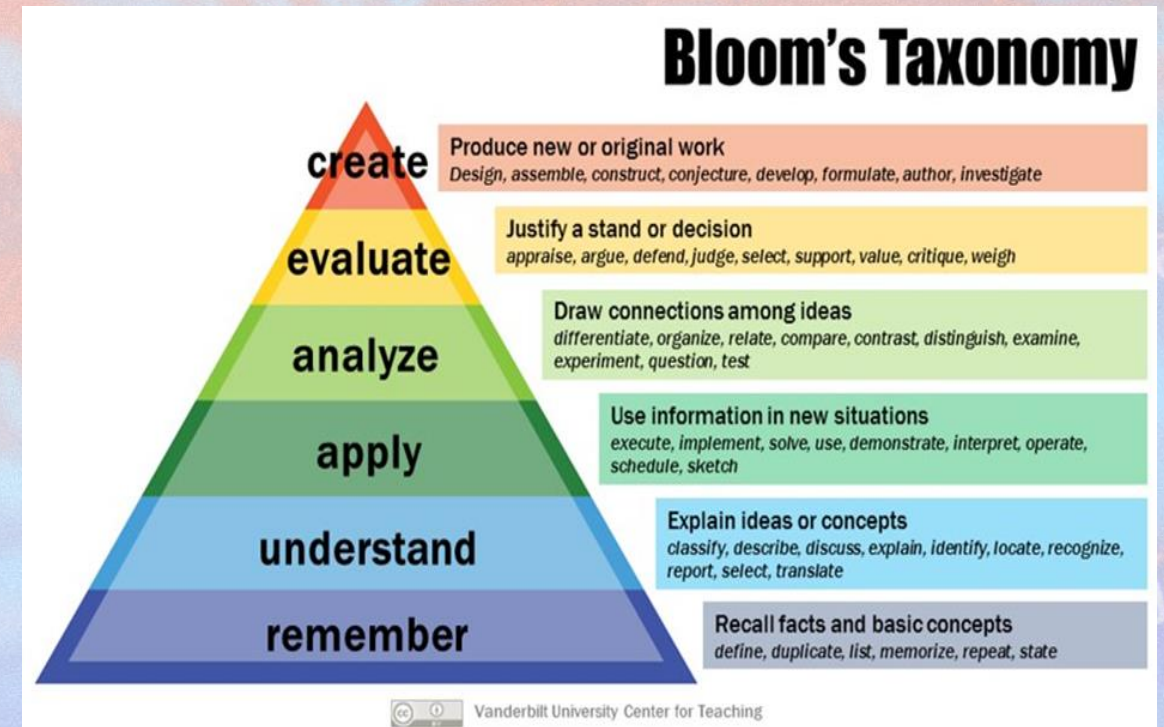
1. Enable my students to **learn more about digital literacy** and **critical literacy**.
2. Enable my students to practice their academic skills by asking them to prepare:
 - a **draft of an academic essay** using the Generative AI of their choice,
 - **critically discuss their work** in focus groups on the process and their choice of Generative AI, sources and digital tools used and their effectiveness and usefulness in drafting their essays.
3. **Interview volunteer students** on their **experiences with Generative AI** and to what extent the integration of Generative AI in their lesson strengthened their critical digital literacy skills.

Changes to the EAP Curriculum

Digital literacies can be seen as “the individual and social skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share and create meaning in the growing range of digital communication channels” (Dudeney, et al., 2013, p.2).

Critical digital literacy, according to Darwin, (2017) relates to both literacy and digital skills. It gives students the required tools to examine:

- the linguistic and non-linguistic features of digital media,
- to identify their embedded biases and assumptions, in order to access the truth.



Initial Results

1. What are the EAP students' experiences and perceptions of Generative AI?

AI doesn't have the emotional intelligence humans have.

It can't replace critical thinking.

AI it's not really useful for the things I need to do for my studies, because ChatGPT doesn't have access to the academic sources that I need to read.

It [Grammarly] helps me not to make grammar mistakes, but in terms of structure it doesn't help me at all. I mean, it's the structure, the tone I use.

The emotion of the of the writer or the speaker is difficult to catch for AI.

Initial Results

2. How do the students use Generative AI to support their academic writing?

Sometimes I did use parts, but I actually I never really copied and pasted it. So, I just picked and took some ideas, and kept thinking myself what I wanted to write.

I use AI to find sources.

It [ChatGPT] gives me a summary of a text...I usually read it to understand the context of the text summarised.

Initial Results

3. How and to what extent can the strengthening of critical digital literacy skills support student academic writing needs?

After I started using ChatGPT to find sources, I spent more time to evaluate the resources provided from AI. So, I gained some knowledge to evaluate the creditability and trustworthiness of the source, that makes my academic skill better than before.

Digital literacy comes with practice. So, if you do that several times, you will then understand each time something new. So yeah, I think it's practice that gives me more than ChatGPT and other AI.

Conclusions and Implications

- Students tend to use AI to complete their written assignments.
- Like many scholars, I believe that students will not stop using these innovative technologies to improve/enhance their writing (Jones, 2023), therefore focusing merely on ways of discouraging students from doing so may not solve the issue of relying on Generative AI.
- I believe what teachers should do instead is to teach their students to critically approach and evaluate Generative AI so they can make the right academic choices for themselves.
- I expect that the findings of this study will shed light on how incorporating Generative AI in an EAP writing class can support students' academic development and strengthen their critical digital literacy.

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