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Teaching

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MARCH 16, 2023

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From: Beth McMurtrie

Subject: Teaching: What You Need to Know About ChatGPT

This Week I:

- Describe highlights from a webinar on ChatGPT and other AI
- Ask how AI tools could hurt, or benefit, students with disabilities
- Point you to some colleges' guidance on ChatGPT
- Ask you to share a survey with online students

- Want to get your opinion on the value of mental-health breaks for students

What's Next for AI in Teaching?

Last week more than 1,600 people showed up for our virtual forum on how ChatGPT and other cutting-edge technology will shape teaching and learning. If you missed it, you can watch the video [here](). If you're short on time, though, here are some key takeaways:

Communicate with your students. You're probably still figuring out what you think of generative AI. That's expected, said Betsy Barre, executive director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching at Wake Forest University. But don't hold off on talking to your students about it. "That's just always a useful strategy of explaining what it is to you and how you expect them to use it or not," she said. "You have the right to change your mind about that. But early on just make sure you're in communication."

That's important because different professors have different expectations. Some might ban it entirely; others might encourage its use in limited ways. And you don't want to trip students up unintentionally if you don't make your views clear. (For a list of classroom policies you can check out this [Google doc](), created by Lance Eaton.)

Be cautious about detection tools. Despite claims you may have seen, tools that have been created to detect the use of ChatGPT are not very accurate, says Anna Mills, a writing instructor at the College of Marin who has been [compiling](http://) [resources]() on AI text generators. "All have been shown to have false positives that could lead to a false accusation of cheating," she said. Instructors should also be aware of privacy concerns, she noted, such as: How are these tools using the writing that you put into them?

There are other ways to bolster academic integrity. This is a big one, of course, as it ties into the desire to cheat-proof assignments and assessments. It's likely impossible to outmaneuver technology, the panelists said. But tapping into what is already

known about good pedagogy can help. Talk to your students about why writing is important. Design assessments that seem valuable to students, not like make-work. Spend more time in class having students demonstrate their learning. Some of these things are easier said than done, of course, but their point is that you don't have to reinvent the wheel to reinforce academic integrity.

These tools can be an educational aid. Barre talked about several ways in which generative AI can be a positive force. If a student doesn't understand a concept, it can ask ChatGPT to explain it like it was talking to a ninth grader, for example.

Steve Weber, vice provost for undergraduate curriculum and education at Drexel University, said it may help to think about how STEM disciplines invoke layering and abstraction. Computer-engineering students need to learn chemistry and physics in order to understand electronic devices and circuits, and eventually understand microprocessors. But once you get to that level of learning, you don't need to think about the underlying science because, he says, that has been "abstracted away." Similarly, students studying calculus don't need to continually show that they understand long multiplication. Are there analogous examples in the humanities or social sciences, where generative AI can perform that foundational work — after students have demonstrated mastery — to free up time to spend on more complex topics?

Digital literacy is more important than ever. Artificial-intelligence tools, and generative AI in particular, raise a host of ethical, political, economic, and social questions. Plus, this tech is soon going to be everywhere, including students' future professions. (The technology behind ChatGPT, in fact, just got an upgrade this week.) Colleges need to figure out how to graduate digitally savvy students in all disciplines. "The integration of technology into our lives is so pervasive that the restriction of education about AI to the computer scientists and the computer engineers makes no more sense than the restriction of taking English classes by English majors," said Weber.

Start a conversation on your campus, or in your discipline. All of the panelists stressed the importance of holding wide-ranging, nuanced conversations about the impact and value of generative AI. Weber is leading a 19-person committee at Drexel, including faculty members from a variety of disciplines, to talk about these issues. Barre encouraged teaching-and-learning centers to bring faculty together to learn from one another and tap into the expertise of computer scientists and others on campus. Mills, who provided feedback to OpenAI, which developed ChatGPT, on its guidance for educators, encouraged academics to make their voices heard in how these technologies evolve.

What questions or plans do you have around generative AI? Have you found any resources particularly valuable? Write to me at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com — I'd like to hear about them.

AI and Disability

As instructors think about redesigning elements of their courses to address ChatGPT and other text generators, the question of how this will affect students with disabilities often comes up. In-class assessments, including oral assessments, may present problems for some students, for example. But AI tools could also be a helpful study aid. As one viewer in our webinar last week wrote: "My son has dyslexia. He uses AI as a tool to help organize his thoughts and research into cohesive writing. He says it has changed his life."

I'd like to dive deeper into the impact of generative AI on students with disabilities. If you have thoughts on the topic write to me at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com

College Guidance on ChatGPT

Looking for more guidance on generative AI? Here is what some universities have put together:

[Practical Responses to ChatGPT and Other Generative AI](#) — Montclair State University Office for Faculty Excellence

[ChatGPT](#) — University of California at Irvine Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation

[AI-Generated Content in the Classroom: Considerations for Course Design](#) — Illinois State University Center for Integrated Professional Development

[Resource Sheet: Teaching and Learning With Artificial-Intelligence Apps](#) — University of Calgary Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning

[ChatGPT: A Brief Introduction and Considerations for Academic Integrity](#) — the Johns Hopkins University Center for Teaching Excellence & Innovation

[ChatGPT and AI Composition Tools](#) — Washington University in St. Louis Center for Teaching and Learning. The [syllabus template](#) has been updated to mention ChatGPT.

[FAQ: ChatGPT in the Classroom](#) — by Andrew Maynard for Arizona State University

[ChatGPT Resources for Faculty](#) — University of Pittsburgh Center for Teaching and Learning

Survey of Online Students

Our colleague Julian Roberts-Grmela wants to hear from students enrolled in — or considering — remote classes! If you teach remote courses, please share [this survey](#) with your students so they can help us understand this generation's evolving learning preferences. (That could include students enrolled in remote classes as well as any students who have expressed an interest in remote or hybrid options.)

The number of students enrolled only in online courses nearly doubled between 2019 and 2021, according to our data analysis. We know remote instruction doesn't work well for everyone. But we also know there is ongoing demand for remote or hybrid learning. We want to learn why.

Questions? Email Julian at julian.roberts-grmela@chronicle.com

Do Mental-Health Breaks Help or Hurt?

In a recent *Chronicle* advice piece, Sarah Rose Cavanagh argues that it's time to take another look at the trend toward giving students mental-health breaks. Cavanagh, whose field is psychology, works at a teaching center and has a new book on mental health coming out soon. She thinks that granting pauses are not always the best response to what ails students. As she puts it: "Campus policies that offer mental-health breaks from class aim to solve one problem (student anxiety and stress) but often end up exacerbating another (student avoidance of social interaction, which tends to amplify anxiety)."

We know mental-health breaks have become a thorny issue on many campuses, and we want to hear more about what you're seeing — and how you're responding — in your classes. Have a story, observation, or perspective to share? Use this Google Form to fill us in.

Thanks for reading Teaching. If you have suggestions or ideas, please feel free to email us at beckie.supiano@chronicle.com or beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com.

— Beth

Learn more about our Teaching newsletter, including how to contact us, at the Teaching newsletter archive page.

Beth McMurtrie

Beth McMurtrie is a senior writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* where she writes about the future of learning and technology's influence on teaching. In addition to her reported stories, she helps write the weekly Teaching newsletter about what works in and around the classroom. Email her at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com, and follow her on Twitter @bethmcmurtrie.

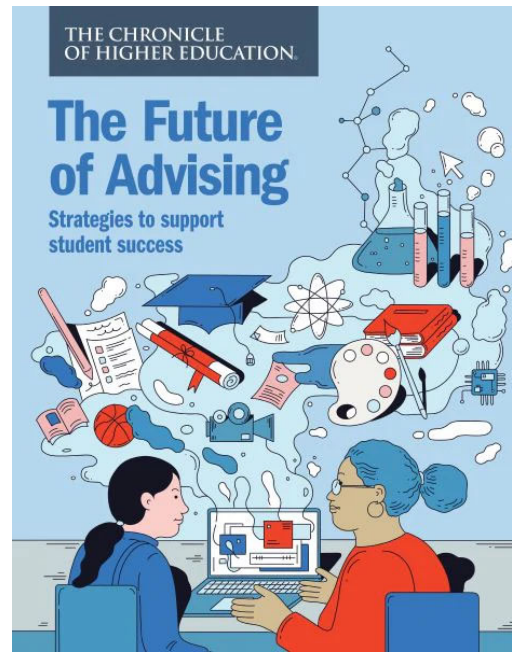## IN THE CHRONICLE STORE

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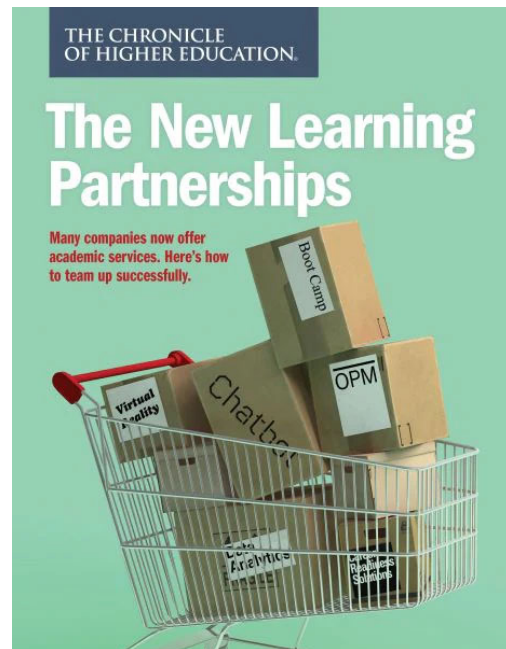
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