

# GenAI: In or Out? Who Decides?

Maria L. Plochocki  
Dept of English, Lehman College  
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# Limited options at present

Adapt or ...?

- Be irrelevant?
- Be a Luddite\*?
- Be unemployed?

- But what does adapting mean?

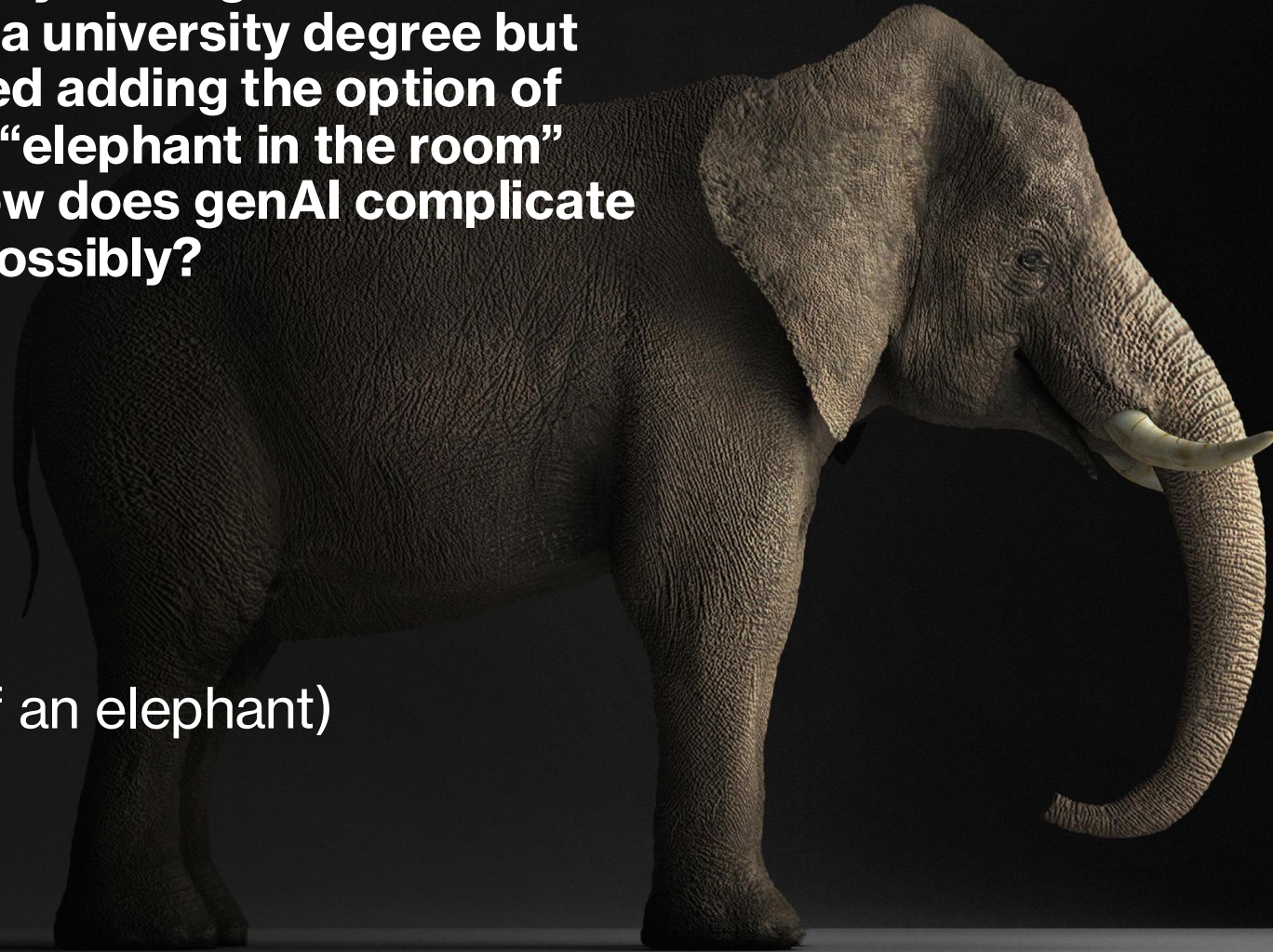
# My Own Policy

Part of my policy on academic integrity :

**Since generative AI such as ChatGPT is here to stay and constantly evolving, we'll be making use of same in the writing you'll complete this term. Approved uses of this technology will be integrated into the writing assignments you'll complete; you'll also be required to document and reflect on your experience with this technology. Any other use, such as to compose an entire first draft for you, is not acceptable!**

This translates into having students choose a genAI tool to use in completing an assignment and reporting/ reflecting on their use of same, writing a brief description of which tool they used, and for what purpose, including screenshots of their input and its output, and then a reflection: how was their experience using this tool? Would they recommend it to others? Why (not)? How helpful was it compared to other sources of feedback, such as from me and/ or their classmate/s?

**I also start them thinking about it from the first paper, in which I ask, as I have many times before, why writing classes should be required for a university degree but also have started adding the option of addressing the “elephant in the room” that’s genAI: how does genAI complicate this question, possibly?**



(stock image of an elephant)

# **Some Thoughts from my Students this Term:**

# An enthusiastic but also somewhat confused user:

“My writing process became better through AI because it provided me with opportunities to develop my skills and ideas based on the information I already read on my first essay. The AI system provided its greatest value through its ability to help in handling the feedback which I received from my professor. My professor thought that my ideas were strong but needed added development. The AI system showed me which points needed more explanation and more information. The AI system provided users with specific steps to follow for correcting the problems which professors and peers had found. The revision process became easier to handle because of this solution. AI did not, however, take the place of my own writing or thought processes. I created completely original concepts for my essay which I decided to include based on my chosen editing methods. AI could not produce my authentic voice until I had completed all required revisions. I learned from this experience that AI functions as a writing assistant which authors should use to create their work. AI proved useful for the revision process because it helped me with my writing work. I plan to use the tool for editing and brainstorming purposes, but not to compose complete essays. AI helps students develop their writing skills when used correctly to enhance their academic work.”

# A still more enthusiastic user (gradual convert):

“I found that Chat GPT can be very helpful and indeed useful. When I asked it for help it did not give me a complicated lengthy response which is what I was expecting, it actually gave a very simple and helpful response. It told me that I needed a clearer topic sentence and I also struggled with writing my conclusion, but it helped me figure out what it needed. I was able to use its other advice and implement it in my essay making it sound better and I definitely felt that there is improvement from my first draft. I normally don't like using AI however I can definitely see myself using it to help me improve anything I find needs fixing and to ask any questions I may need an answer to at that moment. The AI added that my first draft had a lot of repetition which I also felt it had so I made sure to limit that and say certain things differently. I also had to make my essay sound more formal and avoid saying “you.” With the help of AI, I was able to organize my ideas better and structure it in a way that fit my essay and make it sound more informative.”

# Some v precise distinctions:

- My experience with *Grok* was good, it was helpful explaining what it did for me or to the text. My experience with *Grok* was really good, it was helpful in explaining what it changed and why, which made the revisions feel like learning instead of just getting “fixed.” For example, when I asked to change the introduction, *Grok* gave me options that made the essay start stronger and more engaging without losing my personal voice from hating writing as a kid. It broke down issues like run-on sentences, awkward phrasing, and weak transitions, then showed improved versions with clear reasons. I will definitely use it again. Because writing is still hard for me sometimes, especially organizing thoughts quickly or making arguments sound convincing, and *Grok* makes the process less frustrating and more productive. It doesn't do the thinking for me, it builds on what I already have, so the final essay still feels like mine. Plus, seeing the before-and-after changes helps me improve my own skills over time.
- *Grok* added things to my ideas such as: better hooks in the intro to grab attention right away, smoother transitions between my personal story and the broader benefits of writing courses, more specific examples of how writing helps in any major/professional life, and a stronger conclusion that ties everything back to real-world success. It also helped me see why my original draft felt choppy (too many short, repetitive sentences) and how small fixes make a big difference in clarity and persuasiveness. This went beyond what my own self-edits or basic tools like spellcheck could do, it gave deeper feedback on structure and impact.

# What makes genAI better, at least sometimes:

“My experience with Gemini was different as it was something I don't primarily use. It was able to quickly provide feedback whilst skimming through the text and point out ways I could expand upon my ideas. It also tied the three body paragraphs together better than I had prior. To an extent, I did enjoy using it, as it was helpful for making me brainstorm and expand on the ideas I had written about. Compared to feedback from my professor or my peer, it was way more efficient as it was able to help immediately. It is possible that it also expanded on other points that could've been missed when examined by real people, which is one thing I will give credit to. AI technology is able to pinpoint everything exactly as you ask which is something I admire about it.

However, I ultimately preferred feedback from my professor as opposed to Gemini. It may come from a personal bias of disliking the use of AI technology, however I enjoy direct feedback from a real person as opposed to a bot. My professor was able to point out a great spot within my essay where I contradicted myself. With this, I was able to expand and not be able to make this prior mistake and even add an additional body paragraph discussing it. Feedback from a real person also feels more valued as opposed to coming directly from a robot. It makes my work actually feel admired and listened to.

# A refusenik's progress:

**“Original Completed Untainted Draft by [name redacted] (Didn't use AI, more description on the bottom)**

“The A.I that I used was ChatGPT, I used it after writing my essay. I used it for revision, rewriting, telling me the things that I've done wrong, and bold the parts it has changed with my essay.

The prompt I used was: 'Can you revise my Essay and rewrite it for me, and Bold the parts that you have changed. Can you also please fix some of the stuff that was wrong with it and tell me what were the things I did wrong at. The Essay: *The essay was the original draft copied and pasted from above in between quotation marks, I wrote this little text to save you time and space. The screenshots will be below no. 3.*'

**I will not use it again.** The reason being first being, when I told it to bold the text it had changed, it also changed my original text and didn't bold it. The second reason is that, after it “revised” my work it gave me and itself a grade. It gave itself an “A” and gave me a “C+” to “B-,” implying bias. It also said that in some paragraphs I didn't state evidence. It did however gave some good tips.”

# A qualified acceptance:

“ChatGPT was extremely useful. It gave me new reasoning to support an idea that I had trouble expanding on. I probably will use it again if I ever need help understanding an assignment, but other than that, I don’t plan on using AI to help write any assignments. The usage of AI destroys environments, so I’d prefer to limit my use of it as much as possible. Grammarly was also extremely useful in helping me to correct my punctuation, diction, and spelling. ChatGPT didn’t add to the feedback I got from my peer reviewer. However, as I stated before, it added to my idea on critical thinking. The fact that my explanation was already lacking was what I, as well as my peer reviewer, knew I needed to adjust. Grammarly cannot add to the feedback because I only have the free version, which gives limited access to what the paid version offers.”

# So what now?

AS this range of responses suggests, some students embrace genAI more enthusiastically than others. Even better: they show that they're keeping their minds open, regardless of their starting points (how familiar they are with genAI, their access to same, among other factors). Some quite intentionally refuse to use it or limit their use – also valid. As well, since they use genAI on every major assignment, though they decide at what stage and for what purpose/s, their use can also evolve as the technology does.

# In or Out? Past and Future:

## (RECENT) PAST

- So what has your experience been?

## FUTURE:

- What will you do differently now?

# \*Two v different takes on Being a Luddite:

## [From the National Archives \(UK\):](#)

“Luddites were protesting against changes they thought would make their lives much worse, changes that were part of a new market system. Before this time, craftspeople would do their work for a set price, the usual price. They did not want this new system that involved working out how much work they did, how much materials cost, and how much profit there would be for the factory owner.”

## [From History.com:](#)

- “Luddite’ is now a blanket term used to describe people who dislike new technology, but its origins date back to an early 19th-century labor movement that railed against the ways that mechanized manufacturers and their unskilled laborers undermined the skilled craftsmen of the day.
- The original Luddites were British weavers and textile workers who objected to the increased use of mechanized looms and knitting frames. Most were trained artisans who had spent years learning their craft, and they feared that unskilled machine operators were robbing them of their livelihood.”