

# Navigating the AI Frontier: My Journey in the “Using ChatGPT in Higher Education” Course

By Yuliia Fernos

In an era characterized by technological advancements at an unprecedented pace, Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands at the forefront of transformative change across various industries, including education. Educators and institutions of higher learning are increasingly recognizing the significance of integrating AI-driven tools into the classroom.

As an AI enthusiast and an advocate for the transformative power of AI in education, I had the privilege of participating in the “Using ChatGPT in Higher Education: A Hands-on Course.” This course provided a unique opportunity to explore and harness the potential of AI, specifically ChatGPT, within the context of higher education. In the span of five weeks and a series of interactive online meetings, participants are guided by experts Dr. Al-Ali and Dr. Miles to delve into the world of ChatGPT.

During this course, educators embarked on a journey to gain a comprehensive grasp of ChatGPT’s role as an instructional tool. The curriculum was meticulously designed to help

instructors explore the myriad ways they could integrate ChatGPT effectively within their classrooms. Furthermore, it encouraged participants to adopt a critical perspective on the pedagogical applications of ChatGPT.

If one desired to obtain a certificate, it required more than just attending the scheduled Zoom meetings, which were thoughtfully arranged for two different groups, allowing participants to choose the day and time that suited them best. In addition to these interactive sessions, participants were also required to complete a series of weekly tasks. These tasks included active participation in discussion boards that were dedicated to various aspects of utilizing ChatGPT. The discussions served as a forum for sharing insights, exploring challenges, and brainstorming creative ways to leverage ChatGPT effectively in higher education.

Furthermore, the course entailed assignments that were meticulously designed around the topics covered in the weekly

discussions. These assignments provided a practical application of the knowledge and insights gained during the course. Participants were tasked with applying ChatGPT to real-world scenarios within the context of higher education, thereby reinforcing their understanding and honing their skills.

Throughout my participation in the “Using ChatGPT in Higher Education” course, I’ve garnered several key takeaways that underscore the immense potential of ChatGPT in the educational landscape:

- 1) **Efficiency and Time-Saving for Teachers:** ChatGPT can be a remarkable time-saver for educators. ChatGPT can be an invaluable asset in streamlining the lesson planning process. Teachers often spend a significant amount of time researching and crafting lesson plans that align with curriculum standards and engage students effectively. With ChatGPT, educators can

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expedite this process by generating detailed lesson outlines, activity suggestions, and discussion prompts based on specific learning objectives and topics.

*Example:* Imagine a history teacher preparing a lesson on World War II. Instead of spending hours searching for relevant historical anecdotes and crafting discussion questions, the teacher can provide ChatGPT with a brief outline of the lesson objectives and key points. ChatGPT can then generate a comprehensive lesson plan that includes historical facts, discussion topics, and even suggestions for multimedia resources to enhance the learning experience. This allows teachers to invest more time in delivering engaging and interactive lessons rather than extensive planning.

- 2) **Enhanced Learning Opportunities for Students:** ChatGPT serves as a valuable resource for students seeking

instant access to information and support. It can provide additional explanations, clarify doubts, and offer alternative perspectives on subjects. Moreover, ChatGPT can facilitate self-paced learning by generating practice questions, quizzes, or study guides tailored to students' specific needs and skill levels.

*Example:* A student submits their history essay to ChatGPT, asking for feedback on their analysis of a historical event. ChatGPT reviews the essay and provides feedback, pointing out areas where the argument could be more precise and suggesting additional historical references for supporting claims. This immediate feedback empowers the student to revise and improve their essay more efficiently, contributing to their overall learning process.

This use of ChatGPT not only saves students time but also encourages self-directed learning and continuous improvement in their writing skills. It's a prime example of

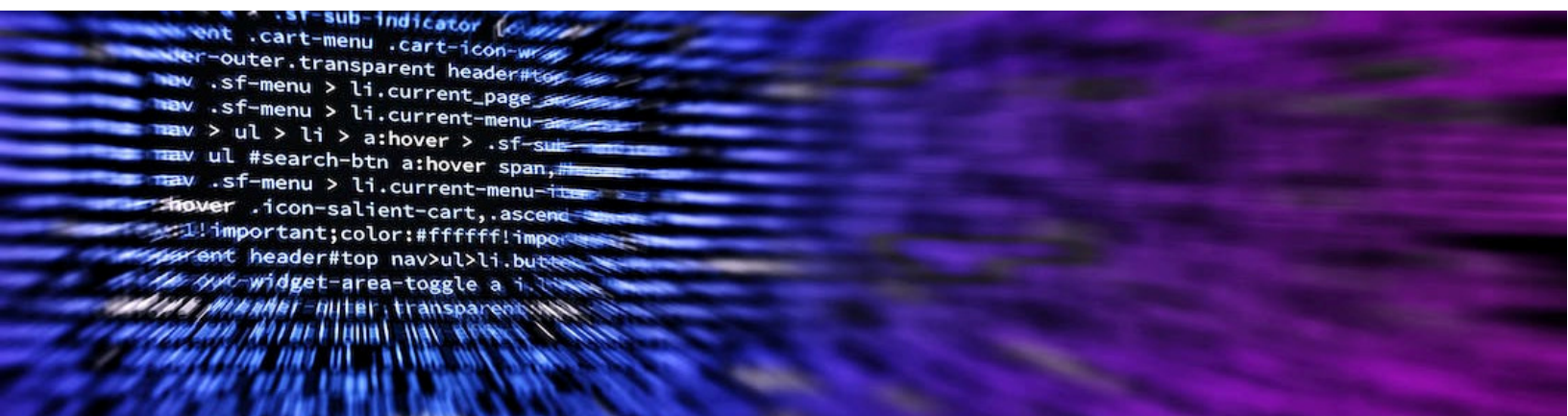
how AI can enhance the educational experience by providing on-demand support and guidance to students.

To avoid cheating, educators can establish a policy where students are required to submit their initial drafts along with their requests for essay feedback. By requiring draft submissions, teachers can verify that students have made an effort to work on the essay independently before seeking AI assistance.

- 3) **Specific Instruction for Optimal Results:** To harness the full potential of ChatGPT, it's crucial to provide clear and specific instructions. While ChatGPT is a powerful tool, it operates based on the instructions it receives. Teachers should guide ChatGPT with precise prompts to ensure it generates accurate and relevant responses.

*Example:* Instead of asking AI to write about World War II, you need to clarify

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**Topic:** World War II;

**Audience:** ESL learners;

**Style:** academic, formal;

**Level:** B1 level students;

**Task:** write a 150 word reading passage

It is abundantly clear that transformative power of AI in education cannot be overstated, but it also comes with a profound responsibility. Teaching students and educators how to harness AI in the correct way is paramount. It’s not just about using AI as a tool but about understanding its capabilities, limitations, and ethical

considerations. As we prepare future generations for a world that will be deeply intertwined with AI, it is our duty to equip them with the knowledge and skills to leverage AI responsibly and ethically.

**About the Author:** Dr. Yuliia Fernos is an experienced educator with nearly two decades of teaching experience, specializing in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Currently, she teaches at Uman National University of Horticulture (Ukraine).

her passion for ESP education drives her to continuously adapt

to new technologies and teaching methods. Beyond the classroom, she serves as the Community Lead of the Online Professional English Network (OPEN) Alumni Community of Practice, fostering collaboration and professional growth. She also facilitates MOOC course on Creating and Implementing Online Courses, further contributing to the advancement of online education.

She is dedicated to enhancing the learning journey for her students and fellow educators through innovation and excellence in ESP education.

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## CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

This is presented to

*Yuliia Fernos*

in recognition of participation in and completion of “Using ChatGPT in higher education: A hands-on course”. A **10 hour** course offered for **Cohort 2** in **May and June 2023**.

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