

Deconstructing and reconstructing the academic essay: a model for using ChatGPT to improve English language learners' writing

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of increasingly sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools that can assist learners to become better writers has produced excitement and concern in equal measure among education providers. This technology, however, is clearly here to stay and offers tremendous advantages to learners if used within a proper framework and according to sound guiding principles. In this paper, the author proposes a model for using ChatGPT to improve English as a Second language (ESL) students' performance in an argumentative essay assignment based on a process writing approach. According to the proposal, the students will generate a ChatGPT essay at the outset of a 14-week elective course (after being taught how to instruct and prompt the AI tool to ensure that the specific assignment requirements are met). The intention is that AI-generated essay will be used as a starting point for investigation and learning development. Through a series of exercises, students will analyse their AI-generated essay and deconstruct it to identify the organizational elements, before modifying it and adding their own content. They will be instructed to prompt ChatGPT to provide them with feedback during the ongoing writing process. Thus, by synthesizing their own words and ideas with those produced by ChatGPT, students should be able to produce carefully crafted, well-constructed argumentative essays created with dual assistance from the course facilitator and the latest AI technology