

How AI Exposes a Flawed Educational System

The introduction of GPT 4 took my school, and virtually all others by storm. Students began to copy and paste homework questions and get rapid responses, teachers generated class content, and the paradigm of the school was flipped on its head. I remember first interacting with this enigma. It felt so easy, asking questions, getting responses, taking it in different directions, and seeing the limits to which it could be taken. Even in college classes. In one class, the teacher asked a question about possible considerations of one philosopher's ideology. I looked to the computer next to me and there it was, the hyperfast text generation of GPT, spitting out a five-point bullet list. The student rephrased the first bullet point which the teacher met with praise. People have always gamed academic systems to get good grades, but gaming it to this degree, as GPT makes so incredibly simple, is a challenge on its own. Yes, If a student wants to take their education into their own hands, then they might not opt to use GPT, or merely use it as a learning tool to assist their efficiency. But if a student has no desire to learn, and simply wants to get by and get their grade, then GPT can be taken far in terms of its ability to complete academic work. Herein lies the issue.

On March 14th, the San Francisco-based former non-profit Open AI launched its latest rendition of its artificial intelligence software, Chat GPT 4. In the lineage of Chat GPT, each model has increased in unfathomable degrees from one to the next, with, for example, GPT 4 having a better ability to understand user's intentions, increased accuracy, and the ability to search the internet in real-time according to the user's requests (Marr). Chat GPT is a type of Large Learning Model (LLM) which is an algorithm (a set of procedures for solving a problem) that uses deep learning techniques to summarize large amounts of data and generate and predict

new content. The interesting thing about Learning Language models is that as opposed to other forms of seemingly powerful AI, like what is used in chess bots which at this point have the ability to defeat players at the highest level, LLMs run fundamentally on human logic, which is what Open AI continually aims to develop in each version of Chat GPT. This is what deep learning is; modeling a machine's behavior based on how humans think, which sets it leagues apart from the artificial intelligence behind the chess bot (Kerner).



Fig. 1. Mid Journey, *Robot & Teacher*

Now what does this mean for our educators and students across the world? Seen in this image (generated by AI), depicting an artificially intelligent robot alongside a schoolteacher in a classroom, AI already has a presence in education, but it's ambiguous how this relationship will take place. Is it symbiotic with the classroom environment? Is it a threat? Will it help or will it hurt? The students are the primary stakeholders here. Technologies like GPT that change the structure of our education system will additionally change the students it molds. GPT is arguably

one of the biggest game changers when it comes to learning, but it also reveals several challenges to be addressed.

This event is also important to recognize as it is incredibly polarizing. Some people praise GPT 4's potential for expanding education to underprivileged communities and allowing those of diverse learning styles and upbringings to receive an education where the current framework might not suffice. Some people believe that the use of GPT in education creates an unequal playing field, and doesn't increase significant skills like emotional intelligence. Concerns on both sides are valid, and I believe it's important to take a step back and consider the advent of GPT4 and its application to education as a parallel to other significant human discoveries.

To this, I ask: *What does the advent of ChatGPT and its application to the education system reveal about the need for a systematic restructuring of education to deemphasize the meritocratic image of students, and reprioritize the learning itself? Additionally, What might the introduction of AI to education reveal about existing issues residing in the institution itself?*

The reason some educators disagree with the use of GPT in the classroom is that it has the ability to make cheating incredibly easy. Within education, there exists a spectrum of reactions with some seeing it as a tool and others as a setback. GPT creates an unfair playing field in academics. The journal article titled "Shaping the Future of Education: Exploring the Potential and Consequences of AI and ChatGPT in Educational Settings" Aims to respond to both sides of the argument. This academic journal article gives a balanced review of the applications of AI in academic settings. It first provides several arguments for positive outcomes of AI implementation in education, for example, individualized learning, expanding teachers' creative capacity, and automating away tasks that waste time. However, the source also delves

into how AI will negatively disrupt education, like making plagiarism easy, exposing students to potentially false information, and creating a lack of transparency in education where they teach.

The journal states, “The ongoing arms race between plagiarism detectors and AI technology underlines the importance of cultivating academic honesty and reinforcing the value of original work within educational settings” (Grassini 5). This could not be more accurate. The core problem that AI in education exacerbates is its ability to simplify and normalize academic dishonesty, which students participate in in the first place to make themselves perceived as better students by getting better grades. However, this is a, sometimes unconscious, imprudent act that will detract from the tangible learning that should take place.

Our current system of education emphasizes the meritocratic image of students and is structured around it. It emphasizes, “What grade did you get?” and “What was your GPA?” The power of introducing GPT to the educational system raises the issue to a high degree. It shows that at this stage, we have the tools to be able to game the system in the classroom. This idea, however, isn’t new. Grades are meant to be indicators of learning; one’s understanding of a course’s content. However, GPT in schools has exacerbated the tension between learning and the competition for good grades. In the student’s eyes, good academic performance is how the world will perceive them. By using AI to accelerate homework assignments by skipping over stages of critical thinking, they’re essentially getting a badge of merit with no substance behind it.

Before the advent of the smartphone, people had more memory capacity, as they didn’t have devices that could store rapidly accessible information external to their brains. Once the smartphone was introduced, psychological research observed the Google Effect, where an individual’s capacity for memory would decrease if they knew the information would be stored online. Furthermore, rather than remembering the information itself, participants of studies

would remember where the information is stored on a specific device, that is the path to the information rather than the information (Sparrow et al). GPT in education illuminates a striking similarity between itself and the Google effect. Students are using GPT as not only an external memory store but also an external tool for critical thinking. The primary reason students take advantage of this is that it is likely to benefit their meritocratic image by increasing the efficiency and quality of their work.

I would like to add that the problem of creating the strongest meritocratic image in education is primarily an issue in countries like America and China, which is evident in the significance they place on standardized tests, and the badge one receives when they get into X university.

However, I would also like to consider the importance that the introduction of GPT could have for education in the context of educational systems which don't have as strong academic infrastructure. Pisica et al's writing is a peer-reviewed academic journal article that uses a buffet of reliable sources to condense academic's conception of AI in the context of higher education. This journal discusses the collective perception that educators have towards AI technology in the classroom. It also creates parallels between AI and schools, and other disruptive technologies in schools. The journal states, "The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of the role that new technologies can play in an unpredicted situation. The sudden immersion of most of the world's educational systems in the online mode proved to be less difficult and had fewer negative effects in those countries with a higher degree of digitization on those students and teachers who were already familiarized with new technologies and on those institutions that were already connected and equipped with new technological tools" (Pisica). This parallel reveal further considerations in the discussion of integrating GPT to education. While on the one hand, it poses a threat in

terms of exacerbating the priority of meritocratic image in some countries, it might pose a problem to countries without the proper infrastructure to do so. There is an important subtext of the need for underlying infrastructure to ensure the proper introduction of AI to education if we're imagining it on a global scale, which. If this could be dealt with, countries with weaker education systems could effectively replace labor efforts with forms of artificial intelligence for educational purposes.

One thing is clear, as the CEO of Open AI, Sam Altman mentioned in an interview, which is its dual ability to both benefit and disrupt multiple industries (Tyler). But this is pretty obvious. Recently, the term AI, or more specifically, ChatGPT has become synonymous with questions surrounding education. This is for good reason. ChatGPT has fundamentally changed the dynamics of educational institutions, giving students a newfound sense of responsibility when it comes to their education. Furthermore, there are varying degrees to which ChatGPT can be used, but there is also a gray area between using it as a tool to bolster one's education, and using it as a crutch to save the student from doing the work that they should be doing. Take student A, and student B for example. Student A uses ChatGPT to define terms, review concepts, and get advice on studying techniques, whereas student B consistently uses prompts to have it write out entire assignments, and generally, does a lot of the work for them. In student A's case, AI is acting as an agent for improvement, for becoming a more efficient student, whereas student B is using it to game the system, where AI is reducing the value of their education. Both cases involve ChatGPT, but student A, compared to student B will end up gaining significantly more

value from their education as opposed to student B. In a world where students are faced with this moral decision, it's easy to imagine why many resort to using AI to game the system, it's the same reason why people have cheated in school. It's because the school system emphasizes the grade. The grade is what you will tell people, the grade is what will leave a permanent mark on your transcript, the grade is what will determine your future. The education becomes almost secondary. This is the issue that ChatGPT is exacerbating in many cases.

Technologies that change the status quo have had a history of backlash. The news article titled, “Don’t Touch That Dial!” published by Slate and written by Vaughn Bell represents the history of disruptive technology and people’s reactions to them, revealing a common theme of change avoidance. The article introduces the idea of information overload from A Swiss Scientist stating, “The modern world overwhelmed people with data and that this overabundance was both “confusing and harmful” to the mind” (Bell). This was the scientist’s response to, not the release of GPT4, but the use of the printing press. The Swiss scientist died in 1565. History reveals that people are hesitant when it comes to new technology that changes the way things are done, for the printing press, it exposes people to an abundance of information, and the written word socially isolated readers.

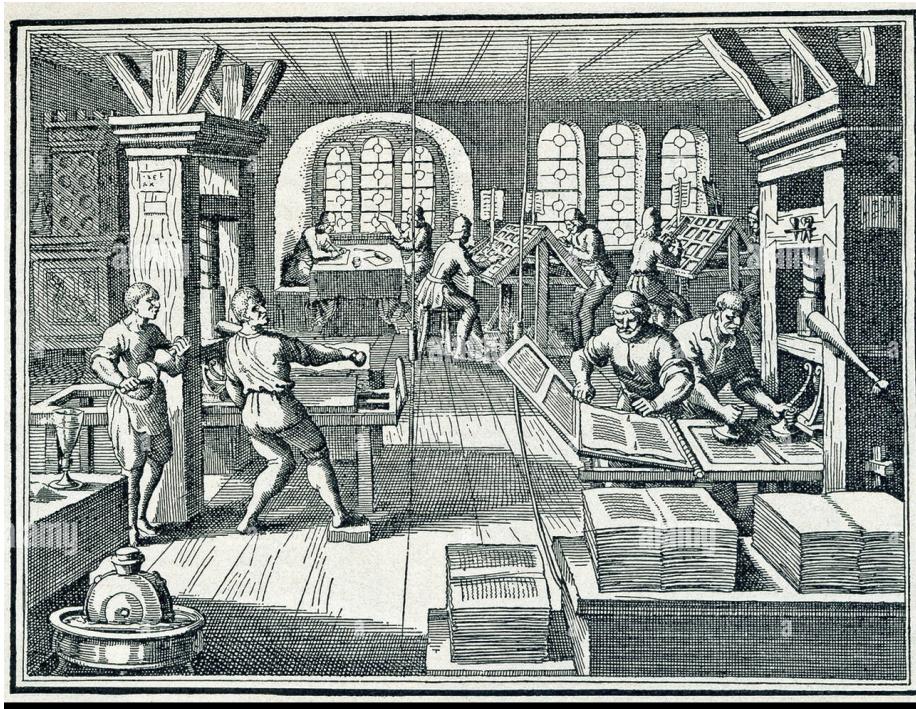


Fig 2. Jost Ammans (1539-1591) Woodcut illustration of the interior of a printing press house in the late 1500s. The engraving is from Gottfried's "Historical Chronicle" published in Frankfurt 1619.

To us, the written word or a printed newspaper isn't anything baffling, but a norm of life that is met with a sense of neutrality. Based on this pattern of fear and indifference, GPT and other forms of AI will become regular facets of everyday life. They will change how things are done, but won't be as particularly damaging or disruptive as they're first perceived to be by the public eye. The article states, "In retrospect, the debates about whether schooling dulls the brain or whether newspapers damage the fabric of society seem peculiar, but our children will undoubtedly feel the same about the technology scares we entertain now. It won't be long until they start the cycle anew" (Bell). Perhaps such reactions are normal to being social creatures with a bias towards the status quo.

It is in your hands, students and educators across the world. The ultimate restructuring of education to make the process of learning seamless is an ideal, and is possible, but will likely take some time. At this point, there are ways to restructure your individual classrooms to emphasize the meritocratic image of students, or to recalibrate the system to, if grades are still present, realign the grade with the student's learning, as learning should be the primary of education. Students can do this too, but it becomes obscured when our peers can accelerate quickly in a class, without actually doing the work to do so. Yes, they're missing out on some learning, but they end up receiving a badge that says that they learned. This is why transparency about goals in the classroom is so significant. Deemphasize the meritocratic image as much as possible. Emphasize learning. Allow your students to take risks and to grow.

AI has broad potential for restructuring how large and impactful areas like the educational system will function. One thing people must stop doing is limiting themselves to this idea of AI as an existential threat or the worst or best thing to ever happen. It might prove useful in light of this new technology to shift our attention toward society's past and look at how other disruptive technologies have changed things for us. Some people reject it due to fear of existential threats, some people reject it due to religious beliefs, and some believe AI to be the solution. Each of these groups states their opinions with such conviction. You think it's about how artificial intelligence will largely disrupt the education system, but really it's about using AI to reveal and address pre-existing issues in the education system such as prioritizing the meritocratic image of students rather than the amount that they learn. The introduction of AI to education will go hand in hand with a systematic restructuring of education that takes into account the applications of AI in everyday thinking and life.

This isn't so much a question of how we will deal with AI, but how we will deal with pre-existing issues in the system of education that AI will exacerbate. If we shift our attention from AI to the education system, there is no threat that AI could pose that would inhibit the learning of students? What would happen if we looked more closely at education, and strengthened it in a way that no matter what external factors are introduced, our case here being AI or otherwise, the system was set up around learning itself, to uplift the flourishing of student knowledge above all else. In this world, no threats would prevail. This world is possible now, and your efforts can help to create it.

Fortifying Education

The introduction of GPT 4 took my school, and virtually all others by storm. Students began to copy and paste homework questions and get rapid responses, teachers generated class content, and the paradigm of the school was flipped on its head. I remember first interacting with this enigma. It felt so easy, asking questions, getting responses, taking it in different directions, and seeing the limits to which it could be taken. Even in college classes. In one class, the teacher asked a question about possible considerations to one philosopher's ideology. I looked to the computer next to me and there it was, the hyperfast text generation of GPT, spitting out a five-point bullet list. The student rephrased the first bullet point which the teacher met with praise. People have always gamed academic systems to get good grades, but gaming it to this degree, as GPT makes so incredibly simple, is a challenge unto its own. Yes, If a student wants to take their education into their own hands, then they might not opt to use GPT, or merely use it as a learning tool to assist their efficiency. But if a student has no desire to learn, and simply wants to get by and get their grade, then GPT can be taken far in terms of its ability to complete academic work. Herein lies the issue.

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that uses deep learning techniques to summarize large amounts of data, and generate and predict new content. The interesting thing about Learning Language models is that as opposed to other forms of seemingly powerful AI, like what is used in chess bots which at this point have the ability to defeat players at the highest level, LLMs run fundamentally on human logic, which is what Open AI continually aims to develop in each version of Chat GPT. This is what deep learning is; modeling a machine's behavior based on how humans think, which sets it leagues apart from the artificial intelligence behind the chess bot (Kerner).



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This event is also important to recognize as it is incredibly polarizing. There are people who praise GPT 4's potential for expanding education to underprivileged communities and allowing those of diverse learning styles and upbringings to receive an education where the current framework might not suffice. There are also people who believe that the use of GPT in education creates an unequal playing field, and doesn't increase significant skills like emotional intelligence. Concerns on both sides are valid, and I believe it's important to take a step back and consider the advent of GPT4 and its application to education as a parallel to other significant human discoveries.

To this I ask: *What does the advent of ChatGPT and its application to the education system reveal about the need for a systematic restructuring of education to deemphasize the meritocratic image of students, and reprioritize the learning itself.* Smaller questions include: What is the student's perception of GPT4 when it comes to their own education? What are the realistic steps that can be taken at this stage to ensure the most benefit with limited expense when it comes to introducing GPT4 to educational systems, and how should we go about introducing it? Can the backdrop of OpenAI as a company be used to make predictions about the efficacy of their claims to do with GPT's safety? Consequently, what are the risks involved in the introduction of AI to education? What might the introduction of AI to education reveal about existing issues residing in the institution itself?

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field in academics. The journal article titled “Shaping the Future of Education: Exploring the Potential and Consequences of AI and ChatGPT in Educational Settings” Aims to respond to both sides of the argument. This academic journal article gives a balanced review of the applications of AI to academic settings. It first provides several arguments for positive outcomes of AI implementation to education, for example, individualized learning, expanding teachers’ creative capacity, and automating away tasks that waste time. However, the source also delves into the ways in which AI will negatively disrupt education, like making plagiarism easy, exposing students to potentially false information, and creating a lack of transparency in education where they teach. The journal states, “The ongoing arms race between plagiarism detectors and AI technology underlines the importance of cultivating academic honesty and reinforcing the value of original work within educational settings” (Grassini 5). This could not be more accurate. The core problem which AI in education exacerbates is its ability to simplify and normalize academic dishonesty, which students participate in in the first place to make themselves be perceived as better students through getting better grades. However, this is a, sometimes unconscious, imprudent act that will detract from the tangible learning that should take place.

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will perceive them. By using AI to accelerate homework assignments by skipping over stages of critical thinking, they're essentially getting a badge of merit with no substance behind it.

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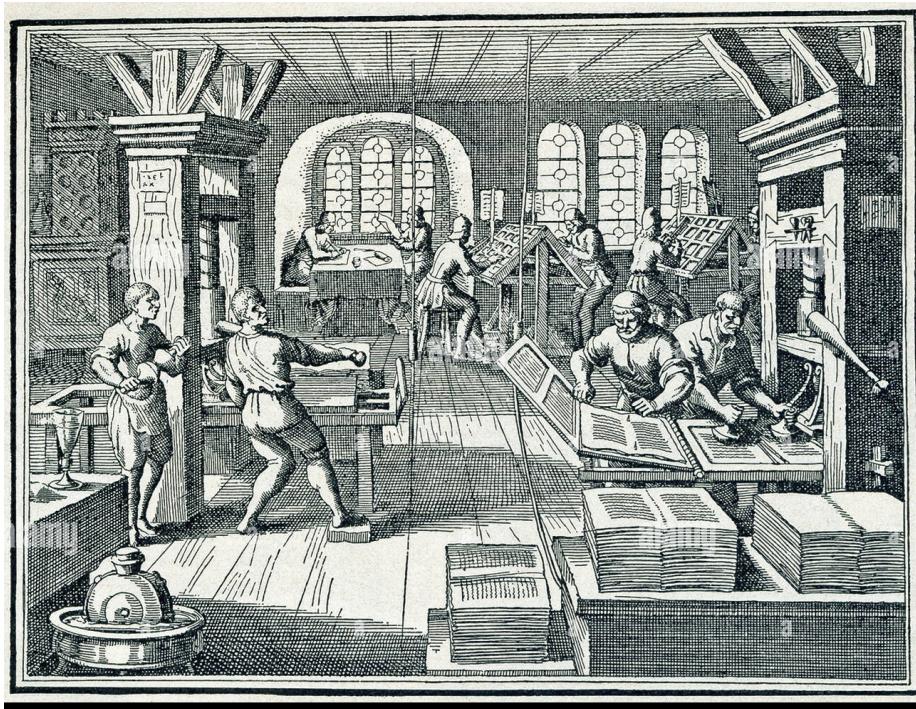


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This isn't so much a question of how we will deal with AI, but how we will deal with pre existing issues in the system of education that AI will exacerbate. If we shift our attention from

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Progression 3 Portfolio Instructions

Final Draft Instructions

Read all of these instructions carefully before finishing your essay or submitting your work.

- 1. Review the prompt for Progression Three and verify that your essay responds completely to this prompt.**

Write an essay that seeks to change the existing conversation about a current event (or a constellation of closely related events) from the last year. Use research to develop and complicate a problem you detect in the way people are talking about, responding to, or making meaning of this event. In doing so, offer your readers a new way of understanding why this event matters to us, what it shows us about the world at large today, and how it shifts our former way of relating to a concept or theme at the heart of that event.

- 2. Review the specific draft expectations and criteria detailed in the Progression Two assignment. Make sure your essay adheres to these criteria.**

- Represent your event(s) using visual texts and background sources (“news round up”)
- Establish a clear intellectual problem, framed as a response to your event.
- Use claims, key concepts, and textual evidence from your research to help to contextualize your event, conceptualize your event, in ways that help you to complicate and respond to your problem
- Uses several media/news articles, at least one long-form popular magazine article, at least TWO scholarly journal articles or scholarly books, at least

one photograph (captioned and cited), at least one audio source, and one oddball source.

- Write & edit to the length of 7-8 pages (not counting space taken up by photographs), page numbered, double-spaced, with proper heading in upper-left corner of first page.
- Format in-text citations, Works Cited page, and titles of sources according to MLA 8th or 9th ed.
- Give your work an informative and creative *title*.
- Add an *Acknowledgements* section at the end of your essay to thank anyone who gave you feedback on this essay (not counting me) or helped you with your thinking.

3. **Check for sentence and paragraph cohesion, and attempt to limit redundancies, unnecessary repetitions (like this one).** Examine how you move from one sentence to the next. Try not to repeat diction excessively but do repeat certain diction and key terms as a strategy to connect the thinking across your essay.
4. **Proofread for grammar and typos***. I recommend reading your essay backward. This method uncentered your confidence and forces you to examine the movement from word to word, but out of the logic of the sentence. If you know you have a particular kind of mistake you tend to make, ask a friend to check for that. Put their name in the acknowledgements (i.e., subject-verb agreement, number, articles (the, a), homonyms (they're / their), verb tense etc.) If you want further help with a grammar problem, ask me, a peer, or make a Writing Center appointment.

Progression Three Portfolio and Writer's Memo Instructions

1. **Gather in one digital file** all the work of Progression 3 (you probably have already done this) ***in reverse order***—Writer's Memo, Final Draft, 2nd Draft, 1st Draft, 3.4, 3.3, 3.2, and 3.1. Be sure to have a proper heading at the start of each unique piece of work/assignment *and to delete any of my instructions*.
2. **Read and reflect** on all of your work, on what it shows you about your learning process during this progression.

3. Write your Writer's Memo: Read over Essays 1, 2, and 3 and reflect on your writing process for this last essay. I'd like you to reflect as much on the work of this progression as on the entire semester's work and the impact it might have had on this final essay. You might discuss what models (from outside readings or *Mercer St.* or your research) inspired your writing and what strategies you took from previous progressions and applied to this one. You might also discuss how feedback played a role in the writing moves you made or how the grading contract influenced the way you wrote this semester. I'm really interested in knowing how your sense of yourself as a writer and your sense of college essay writing has shifted—and what new questions or realizations have arisen.

There were several aspects of the curriculum and specific moments of learning that altered my writing style during the semester. The first was the grading contract. I truly believe that not being concerned with a specific grade as a percentage allowed me to experiment a lot more with the new writing techniques that were being introduced, rather than what I thought was the “right” way to do things based on what I had learned about writing in high school. It took away a lot of the stress usually associated with graded writing, and gave me the mental space to absorb and engage with new techniques, philosophies, and strategies being taught in class.

In terms of the strategies themselves, there were a couple I found very useful. One was the idea of reverse outlining, which stems from an issue in writing where people tend to structure an essay in terms of the order in which they thought of certain ideas, rather than the order that makes the most logical sense. Employing this strategy was really helpful, especially in my progression 2 essay, where I was able to build up a sense of momentum with two consecutive arguments against the comedian Theo Von, then at the end, bring in a voice who supported him. Through this technique, and others where we would restructure our essay, and for example, move an engaging moment to the front to act as a hook, allowed me to see writing as more fluid. This was an incredible change from the type of writing we did in IB English, where we would stick to a particular structure, and use cookie cutter outlines to approach the prompts we were asked. What we did in this course was a great exercise in seeing how writing is an active process where content might shift around, and where things might happen spontaneously.

Some of the readings we did in class surrounding the writing process were helpful for me too. The Verlyn Klinkenborg, excerpt from Several Short Sentences About Writing was valuable. I especially found the idea of not becoming paralyzed after you succeed in writing a good sentence to be something really useful. I noticed that there can be a fear of pushing forwards after I feel like I did something right. Willing to fail and succeed again is a mindset I will undoubtedly take with me as a writer.

The feedback I received on developing more complex questions and coming up with more nuanced responses was useful as well. I learned to be actively aware of my writing process, and became conscious that my writing could move in a different direction in a moment's notice, or could intertwine unconventional sources or modes of thinking that would make for an overall more interesting final product for myself, and the reader.