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### Collaborative Brainstorming with Generative Artificial Intelligence

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# Collaborative Brainstorming with Generative Artificial Intelligence

Kellene O'Hara and Elizabeth Williams

## Overview

Given the widespread use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), it is imperative that writing instructors teach students to use this technology, including Large Language Models (LLM), both critically and ethically.

By providing students with opportunities to practice using these tools, discuss their affordances and constraints, and intentionally reflect on their use, we can better help students navigate this new technological landscape. Thus, this activity uses GenAI as a tool during the invention phase of the writing process. In this activity, students are asked to brainstorm independently, with a peer, and with GenAI. Then, students are asked to reflect on the benefits and limitations of incorporating GenAI in the invention process.

## Time Commitment

30-45 minutes

## Materials

Students will need a computer or tablet with internet access. Additionally, students will need access to a Large Language Model (LLM) such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or Copilot.

Instructors will need a blackboard, whiteboard, chart paper, digital screen or other way of writing and displaying findings and notes for the class. Instructors may also choose to use a timer to help manage the activity.

## Activity Process

- Instructors will preface the activity with a discussion of GenAI and GenAI in the writing process. Instructors may want to gauge student interest, familiarity, or comfort with GenAI. Instructors may want to provide readings, videos, or other materials to engage students in this initial discussion. Because AI-related content evolves quickly, it is recommended that instructors select materials that are current, relevant, and aligned with their pedagogy. Additional reading is provided below to help instructors consider best practices.
- Students will begin by independently brainstorming ideas in response to a writing prompt related to a larger paper or project in the class. Students may be asked to think about a research question for an upcoming paper or counterarguments or possible titles for their essay.
- Next, students will engage with a GenAI platform such as ChatGPT or Claude to produce additional responses to the same prompt.
- Then, students will collaborate with a peer to critically review and discuss the AI-generated text, comparing it with their own ideas and evaluating its usefulness. Potential discussion questions may include:
  - What was your initial reaction to using AI? How did it impact your writing/thinking?
  - How did using AI differ from your normal writing/thinking process?
  - How did the responses that AI generated compare to your own? To your peer's responses? Were any of

the ideas new to you?

- What are the benefits of collaborating with AI to brainstorm? What are the potential limitations of collaborating with AI to brainstorm?
  - What are the benefits of collaborating with a peer to brainstorm? What are the potential limitations of collaborating with a peer to brainstorm?
  - Did AI invent or hallucinate any information? Did you notice any errors? Were all of the responses relevant to your inquiries? Did you notice any bias in the content provided by AI?
  - Were the ideas that AI generated useful? Explain why or why not.
  - Based on this activity, will you use GenAI to help you brainstorm in the future? Why or why not?
- The class will then discuss their findings together. Instructors should guide discussion around brainstorming and the role of collaboration with a peer and with AI.
  - Finally, students will reflect on the activity, considering both the benefits and limitations of GenAI in the writing process.

## Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this activity will:

- Identify benefits and limitations of GenAI during the invention phase
- Consider the role of collaboration with peers and GenAI in the writing process

- Reflect on how GenAI tools influence their own thinking and writing choices

### Learning Accommodations

- Given the risks associated with using artificial intelligence, such as data privacy concerns and environmental harm, some students may not feel comfortable completing this activity. Thus, students should have the ability to opt-out and complete an alternative activity instead.

### Works Cited

- “ChatGPT Usage and Adoption Patterns at Work.” OpenAI, 22 Jan. 2026, [openai.com/business/guides-and-resources/chatgpt-usage-and-adoption-patterns-at-work/](https://openai.com/business/guides-and-resources/chatgpt-usage-and-adoption-patterns-at-work/).
- “College Students and ChatGPT Adoption in the US.” OpenAI, 20 Feb. 2025, [openai.com/global-affairs/college-students-and-chatgpt/](https://openai.com/global-affairs/college-students-and-chatgpt/).

### Further Reading

- “ELATE Position Statement: Exploring, Incorporating, and Questioning Generative Artificial Intelligence in English Teacher Education.” NCTE, 21 Nov. 2024, [ncte.org/statement/exploring-incorporating-and-questioning-generative-artificial-intelligence-in-english-teacher-education/](https://ncte.org/statement/exploring-incorporating-and-questioning-generative-artificial-intelligence-in-english-teacher-education/).
- “MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI Working Paper: Overview of the Issues, Statement of Principles, and Recommendations.” MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, July 2023, [hcommons.org/app/uploads/sites/1003160/2023/07/MLA-CCCC-Joint-Task-Force-on-Writing-and-AI-Working-Paper-1.pdf](https://hcommons.org/app/uploads/sites/1003160/2023/07/MLA-CCCC-Joint-Task-Force-on-Writing-and-AI-Working-Paper-1.pdf).

Vee, Annette, et al. *The Norton Guide to AI-Aware Teaching*. W. W. Norton, 2026.