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Reflection On The JALTCALL LD SIG Forum

Thanks to the LD SIG, this was the first conference I have had the opportunity to attend. I submitted a presentation proposal, and luckily, I was accepted and able to attend the conference through a grant from the SIG. I was informed that it would be a forum where I would present alongside Blair Barr and James Underwood. Initially, I expected people to ask me their own questions. I did not realise presenters generally created their own questions for the attendees to reflect upon. Fortunately, Blair and James prepared questions related to my topic so any embarrassment was averted. However, my presentation lasted for only 25 minutes, so there was not much time for me to ask the attendees to discuss any specific aspects in groups.

My presentation centered on using ChatGPT as a post-writing tool for pen-and-paper writing activities. There were two notable questions from the audience. The first one was about my motivation for conducting pen-and-paper writing tests. I explained that I had received essays written during class time that were free of errors and lexically rich. I suspected the use of AI. Some students admitted to using translators to generate their essays. However, beyond that, it is hard to prove if an essay was AI-generated. To address this issue, I decided to conduct paper writing activities instead. A second question, that has subsequently shaped my overall research, was whether I asked my students to discuss their errors or learning from ChatGPT with their classmates. Consequently, in subsequent writing activities, I incorporated peer feedback into their post-writing process.

Blair Barr's presentation also highlighted the use of AI in writing activities. What was interesting about his method was that students were expected to memorize or understand their writing input by giving a presentation in class. This forced them to learn from and understand any assistance they received from AI. This tactic was further enhanced by not allowing them to read from scripts during their presentations. Since I also require my students to give two to three presentations per semester, I have adopted this strategy in my own classes. I tried this method at three universities. I observed that some students would resort to writing their scripts on the slides, despite being taught how to create effective slides and discouraged from adding too much text. However, I also found that when given topics relevant to their lives and not too abstract (such as climate change), students could speak more naturally and do so without a script. Blair suggested that it is okay for students to utilise AI when writing their scripts, provided they study and understand them before presenting. While I generally do not allow access to devices during writing activities, I agree with Blair that it can be helpful for students to utilise AI when writing their scripts, provided they study and understand them before presenting. I encourage them to write their scripts first without relying on translators, as translators often generate speeches with complex vocabulary that is difficult to pronounce. I advise that once they have written their scripts in their own words, they can use AI as a proofreader with a specific prompt to correct grammar errors rather than altering their wording and ideas.

James Underwood's presentation focused on how to use AI in a way that allows users to still own their learning by employing effective prompts. He used terms such as "goal", "prompt", and "take ownership" to describe this GPT approach. This served as a good reminder for me to constantly explain to my students that learning from AI can only occur if they treat AI as an additional teacher outside the classroom, rather than something that will do their work for them. I think it is important for students to learn specific prompts such as "Can you correct the grammar errors in this essay?"

or “Can you explain why I was wrong?” instead of “Can you write a 200-word essay about the effects of climate change?” We should continue to teach them how to create effective prompts until they can study independently and develop a relationship with AI that benefits their learning.

Overall, I enjoyed the forum. People were kind, and I felt they were genuinely there to help us improve our teaching methods and research. My experience with this first presentation was encouraging and motivating, making me eager to present at other conferences.