

Using OpenAI in writing critiques

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International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 19(02), 1469-1475

Publication history: Received on 17 April 2026; revised on 26 May 2026; accepted on 28 May 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.19.2.1193>

Abstract

The study explored how OpenAI was used by the students in writing critiques, focusing on their experiences, opportunities, challenges and proposed rubrics for improving students' critique writing skills. This study is important because critical thinking skills and responsible AI use affect students' writing practice and general improvement. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative design, data were gathered from 10 third- year teacher education students at a private institution through unstructured interviews and focused group discussion. The findings showed that students used OpenAI to generate ideas, organize structures, improve sentence construction, and enhance academic language, which showed that opportunities existed. The study also revealed several challenges, such as reduced cognitive engagement, ethical and academic integrity, technical limitations, and occasional inaccuracies in generated outputs. To address these issues, rubrics as assessment tool was proposed that included ethical guidelines and collaborative activities. The study recommended guided integration of OpenAI and active participation by teachers and students to improve critique-writing skills. The main objective of this study is to explore the use of OpenAI in writing critiques and to identify the opportunities, challenges, and proposed a rubric as an assessment tool in improving students' critique writing skills. Hence, this study aimed to develop analytic rubrics entitled " Rubrics as an Assessment Tool in Critique Writing" that helped teachers assess writing effectively, assisted students in responsible and ethical integration of OpenAI in different literary genres, encouraged originality and ensured that all students became confident and independent critique writers.

Keywords: Openai Integration; Critique Writing; Academic Integrity; Ethical AI Use

1. Introduction

Writing is a fundamental part of effective communication and key to the educational advancement of students. Hence, a major transformation in education was the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), as many students integrate it into their academic practices. Highlighting its dual nature, it aims to balance its potential as a scaffolding tool with the risk of ethical concerns and misuse.

1.1. Contextualizing writing critiques

OpenAI systems were originally designed to support academic tasks. Luckin et. Al. (2016) [1] describes AI as a form of academic scaffolding that enables students to perform tasks beyond their independent roles. In critique writing, its value lies in its ability to provide guidance in multiple perspectives that can help students deepen their analysis. However, Chan et. Al (2023) [2] noted that students who heavily rely on AI-generated outputs may lead to superficial learning and weakened critical engagement, adversely affecting their performance in critique writing, hindering their overall development. Hence, the role of the student is to use it as a tool in identifying arguments, evaluating evidence, and organizing critical responses.

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1.2. Emergence of AI in Education

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming education. The Department of Education [3] promotes the use of technology to support inclusive and flexible learning modalities and encourages innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Studies by Thorbecke [4], Abad [5] and Estrallado et al. [6] found that OpenAI has practical applications, making everyday tasks easier in education, effectively assisting students in writing, organization, and idea generation, streamlining the academic process, and improving productivity. AI-powered platforms improved student motivation and participation in blended learning environments. However, Sanchez [7] and Mhlanga [8] point out that the digital divide, particularly in rural areas, may limit access to such technologies, affecting their overall implementation, as well as ethical concerns on principles of privacy, fairness, transparency, and responsible use. Students must be equipped not only with the skills to use AI tools but also with an understanding of their limitations and implications.

1.3. Use of AI in teaching and Learning Process

Several studies have noted that educators and students have a positive outlook on integrating OpenAI into teaching and the learning process. Reiss [9] noted positive feedback on how it will potentially enrich learning and increase personalization. Meanwhile, Peneyra et al. [10] reported mixed experiences emphasizing benefits alongside challenges such as misinformation and ethical concerns. Hence, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [11] emphasized that the use of AI in education should remain human-centered and should support, rather than replace, learners' critical and creative thinking abilities.

Despite the growing use of OpenAI in academic writing, studies focusing on students' experiences in using AI for critique writing remain limited, particularly in Philippine higher education contexts.

Existing studies commonly focus on the general benefits and risks of AI-assisted writing; however, there remains insufficient qualitative research examining how Teacher Education students utilize OpenAI in critique writing tasks that require analysis.

To meet the demands of digital learning and competency, the investigation was initiated to offer a guide for the critique writing process, catering to students at various critique writing stages of their writing development. Hence, this study was conducted to explore the use of OpenAI in critique writing and identify the opportunities and challenges of it and establish recommendations to enhance its integration, helping students become effective critique writers.

Further, the present study was conducted specifically in Sorsogon, Philippines. It was limited to the 3rd year teacher-education students enrolled in a writing course during the School Year 2025-2026, at a private higher education institution, located in Sorsogon City.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to explore how students use OpenAI in writing critiques, resonating their experiences. Specifically, this study (1) explored how students use OpenAI in writing critique; (2) identified the experiences in terms of opportunities and challenges; and (3) proposed an instructional rubric about responsible integration of OpenAI based on the results of the study.

2. Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the use of OpenAI among Teacher Education students in a private higher education institution during the school year 2025-2026.

2.1. Research design

The research design provided a clear framework for investigating the problem, while the methodology outlined the process and instruments used in data collection and analysis. A qualitative design using reflexive thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed as it enabled the teacher-researcher to obtain detailed descriptions of the students' use, experiences and strategies in maximizing the ability of OpenAI.

2.2. Source of data

The sources of data were comprised of ten (10) third-year teacher education students enrolled in courses requiring critique writing and analytical tasks enrolled in the school year 2025-2026, thereby ensuring the completeness and relevance of the gathered data.

2.3. Research ethics

Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the study, as evidenced by the signed letter of approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, Sorsogon State University. An informed consent form was secured from the participants. Also, they are informed about the nature of the study during the critique writing tasks and recorded interviews from interview sessions, ensuring anonymity of responses. The researcher also declared how OpenAI is used in the study.

2.4. Research Instruments

Critique writing activities which served as the primary context along with Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and unstructured interviews proving apt for this study as it effectively collected information. The interview guide was adopted based on the objectives and literature review on the use of OpenAI in writing critiques, it was critically crafted to explore its use, identify experiences Opportunities and relevant challenges, deriving to a plausible instructional material such as an Instructional Rubric as an assessment tool in critique writing.

2.5. Data Collection

The researcher started with the data collection after obtaining approval for the research instruments, executing the process from August 29 to October 18, 2025 during the first semester 2025-2026. A communication letter was drafted and approved, then personally delivered to the dean of the higher education department. The researcher scheduled interviews, oriented participants, secured Informed Consent Forms, and requested permission for the critique writing task. Interviews focused on the participants' experiences in using OpenAI. After data collection, all materials, including critique papers, Turnitin results, photos, and recordings, were organized and compiled to ensure the confidentiality of participants' identities and responses for research purposes only.

2.6. Data Analysis

The study employed Braun and Clarke's [12] Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) to analyze qualitative data through recurring patterns. Initially, critique-writing activities and Turnitin results served as the primary context for identifying the AI percentage and OpenAI prompts used by participants in their activity. Thematic analysis was then employed to code these tools, addressing the research objective of understanding the use of AI in critique writing. Interviews and FGD were also analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on participants' experiences with OpenAI, including opportunities and challenges.

Research methodology and design had provided a systematic and relevant approach in understanding the role of OpenAI in critique writing and its influence on students' writing practices and critical thinking.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis of data, the study revealed the following results:

3.1. Students' Use of OpenAI in writing critiques

The critique-writing process is complex and multidimensional because it requires learners to analyze texts, construct arguments, and communicate their ideas in a coherent, and organized manner. The results revealed the use of OpenAI in writing critiques and their command towards the tool.

3.1.1. Generating Clear Ideas and Concepts

Students use AI to gather ideas and the answers they wanted for a specific topic. OpenAI serves as a guide for them to understand literary concepts, generate ideas, and structure their critique papers. Further, they relied on OpenAI to simplify complex texts, summarize content, and explain difficult concepts. As reiterated by the participant from a sample prompt: *"How familiar are you with this type of criticism... can you give me an example on how to critique using this..."*.

3.1.2. Organizing and Structuring Critiques

OpenAI is used to serve as a guide to format and organize critique papers, including introduction, body, and conclusion. For instance, a participant generated a prompt, *"What are the steps in analyzing a literary text using deconstructivism"* so that they can better established a well-written critique paper.

3.1.3. Language Refinement

Participants used OpenAI to check grammar, improve sentence construction, and refine written outputs.

3.1.4. OpenAI as a shortcut

Some students used OpenAI to generate full critiques or modify AI outputs to appear human-written.

Further, it was noted that most of the participants use AI to motivate them in writing, but they constantly remind them to use it responsibly. Aluede [13] enumerated in their study about the potential applications and ethical considerations of OpenAI in education, in critique writing. This result supports the findings that students' use of AI can be vital to their learning and personal development.

Generally, this theme emphasizes that the role of OpenAI in critique writing depends largely on how students use OpenAI in writing critiques. While some participants used OpenAI as a scaffold to support their understanding and writing process, others treated it as a shortcut for task completion. This underscores the importance of contextualized and guided AI integration in education, particularly among teacher education students who are expected to develop strong critical thinking, ethical awareness, and academic writing skills.

3.2. Experiences of the Participants in using OpenAI in terms of Opportunities

3.2.1. AI as a Cognitive Support

This shows that the students experienced gathering ideas, explanations and the answers they wanted when writing critique using OpenAI. The findings reveal that OpenAI functioned as a cognitive support tool that assisted students in understanding literary concepts, generating insights, and organizing their critique papers more effectively. This is supported by the responses of several participants who utilized AI to clarify difficult topics and guide them throughout the critique writing process. Robledo et al. [14], and De Jesus et al. [15] stated on their study that students often use AI tools like OpenAI to generate ideas, assist with research, and improve writing efficiency.

3.2.2. AI as a Facilitator

Many of the participants used OpenAI to finish all of their school tasks, critique writing becomes easier and accessible. It helped in them completion, organizing and structuring of thoughts and serves as support in drafting and planning. These are supported by the studies of Holland et al. [16] Roose [17] and Shankland [18] wherein it was stated that many students appreciate the instant responses and quick access to information that OpenAI provides, making schoolwork easier and more efficient, and noted in their study that OpenAI is highly capable of supporting students in academic research and completing written assignments.

3.2.3. AI as productivity and time management tool

The participants particularly mentioned how using OpenAI saved more time and required minimal or less effort than what was the norm or was considered the standard.

3.2.4. AI as language enhancement tool

AI enables them to refine and polish critique papers as it assists them in grammar correction, error detection, sentence improvement and refining This is supported by the study of Alrawi [19] wherein it is said that OpenAI will significantly impact education, particularly in areas that rely on written assessments. For students, this shift is already evident in how they use OpenAI to draft essays, summarize readings, and refine academic papers.

Generally, the findings position OpenAI as an enabling academic tool that supports multiple dimensions of critique writing cognitive, structural, temporal, and linguistic. Its role as both a learning scaffold and productivity enhancer reflects the evolving nature of academic writing in the age of artificial intelligence. However, these opportunities must be interpreted alongside pedagogical implications. While OpenAI enhances accessibility and efficiency, there remains a

critical need for instructional frameworks that ensure students continue to develop independent analytical thinking, writing competence, and ethical academic practices.

3.3. Experiences of the Participants in using OpenAI in terms of Challenges

3.3.1. Cognitive Hindrances

The most common theme identified by the researcher as this includes critical thinking, analytic and evaluative skills that has been hindered due to overreliance with AI. Most of the participants mentioned how after using and experiencing OpenAI, they have gotten dependent on using it even for the simplest things, making them lazy to do things on their own. Their critical and analytical skills has been rusted due to overreliance to AI. This is supported by the multiple responses of specific participants.

3.3.2. Inaccurate and Unreliable Information

Many of the participants mentioned they noticed that OpenAI does not always give the right or updated information and data that they asked for. The responses are also supported by the following studies: Cabuquin et al., [20] Mintz and Ryan [21] explored the challenges associated with biased outputs and inaccuracies in AI-generated content.

3.3.3. Threats to Originality and Academic Integrity

These often causes students to put out or release works that are not original and do not have their own personal touch that can be seen as mediocre and below any standards. These responses are also supported by the studies of Embang et al. [22] wherein they cautioned against over-reliance on these tools, which could hinder the development of critical thinking and creativity.

3.3.4. Technical Constraints

The participants mentioned where their main challenge when they experienced OpenAI was having unstable internet/data since it requires them to use it.

According to these responses, OpenAI, despite being useful to many, not everyone and every time can fully use it when they want to, and it shows how important having active and available internet/data at given times when wanting to use OpenAI.

Overall, the findings suggest that while OpenAI offers meaningful academic support in critique writing, its use is accompanied by cognitive, ethical, informational, and technical challenges that must be carefully addressed. These challenges highlight the need for guided integration strategies that promote responsible AI use, critical evaluation of outputs, and the continued development of independent writing and thinking skills. In doing so, educators can ensure that AI functions as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for essential academic competencies.

3.4. Research Output

Based on these results, the researcher proposed rubric as assessment tool that addresses both the opportunities and challenges of OpenAI when used in critique writing. It acknowledges OpenAI as a powerful academic support tool while firmly establishing boundaries that protect originality, critical thinking, and academic integrity. Ultimately, this intervention positions AI not as a replacement for human intellectual effort, but as a structured assistant that enhances learning while preserving the central role of student authorship, reasoning, and creativity.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn

- Students utilized OpenAI to generate ideas, clarify difficult concepts, organize critiques, improve language mechanics, and accomplish writing tasks more efficiently.
- The participants experienced various opportunities of using OpenAI, which can enhance students' writing experiences by making critique writing more accessible, manageable, and time efficient. But they encountered challenges such excessive reliance on OpenAI may lead to cognitive hindrances, inaccurate information, threats to originality and academic integrity, and technical limitations. These challenges indicate that while AI technologies offer meaningful educational support, they may also weaken students' critical thinking, independent analysis, and authentic engagement in writing when used irresponsibly.

- An instructional rubric was proposed to assist students and teachers in integrating OpenAI in critique writing.

Recommendations

- Based on the conclusions, the study recommended the following:
- Higher education institutions are encouraged to establish clear guidelines and policies regarding the ethical and responsible use of OpenAI and other artificial intelligence tools in academic writing.
- Educators are encouraged to integrate AI literacy into classroom instruction to help students understand both the opportunities and limitations of AI technologies, particularly in critique writing.
- Institutions may provide seminars, workshops, and training programs that promote responsible AI integration and strengthen students' digital literacy and critical evaluation skills.
- Teachers may utilize the proposed instructional rubric, "Embracing AI: Instructional Rubric as an Assessment Tool in Critique Writing," to guide students in maintaining originality, critical thinking, and academic integrity while using AI as a support tool. Students are also encouraged to use OpenAI responsibly by treating it as a learning scaffold for clarification, organization, and language refinement rather than as a replacement for independent analysis and intellectual effort.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in this study.

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