
Book Review: Bowen, J. A. and Watson, C. E., (2026). *Teaching with AI. A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning. Second Edition.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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The world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been under scrutiny for many years running, but now we have a much-needed introspection into the value and the ubiquity of this new technology. If the internet, and more specifically the World Wide Web, produced a radical change in our relationship with knowledge, making it overly abundant, AI is right under our eyes (literally and figuratively speaking), fueling an obvious change in our approach and understanding of thinking. The second edition of Jose Antonio Bowen and C. Edward Watson's *Teaching with AI* delves into the availability of and access to research materials and expertise dealing with the spread of knowledge in teaching and learning enhanced by AI but also with the rise of filtered and unfiltered and oftentimes weird misinformation.

The comprehensive research behind this project has produced an analysis that extolls the obvious advantages that come with a proper use of AI: speed, capacity, variety, depth – all related to the way technology in general and AI in particular are viewed – to which tools, tasks, and interaction are added to make the whole process beneficial to teaching and learning in our education system. However, the other side of the coin is that, in many cases, the introduction of AI has eliminated jobs and, therefore, has affected the job market, and will continue to do so in the future. Furthermore, one big caveat points to the fact that, in the authors' opinion, "copying AI text is not plagiarism" because plagiarism means using another person's work, and since AI is not the original work of a person, there is no injured party. The question that remains is how to deal with honesty and morality issues, and whether AI will decrease or eliminate cheating. Big ethics questions and big issues for the future to solve.

Compared to the first edition of this research analysis – mainly due to the emergent new models, application programming interface (API) tolls, and assignments ideas – the 2026 edition has added a completely new chapter on customs bots and simulations, and every chapter has been re-evaluated with considerable re-thinking. This brings teaching AI literacy to the foreground with its logically organized three parts: thinking with AI, teaching with AI, and learning with AI. Preceded by a note on Chronology and an exhaustive Introduction, the three sections are also followed by Acknowledgements, References, and Index.

A quick but necessary detour takes us back in time to Alan Turing, whose innovative approach now acknowledged as the *Turing Test* is "not about thinking, consciousness, intelligence, understanding, sentience, or anything to do with *how* a program might be processing" (p. 16). Turing's idea was to replace the question "Can machines think?" with the question "Can this chatbot make us believe we are interacting with a human?" (p. 16) As the authors point out, we are dealing with a plethora of technologies that "mimic human language and emotion and predict the next word," thus increasing computer speed and capacity.

From *The Turing Test* the book moves on to specifics: *Glossary I*, providing a series of definitions and explanations, of which one stands out: “Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of computer systems to mimic human intelligence and also to the development of such systems” (p. 17). The same source clarifies the verbiage used in the book by explaining in simple words such terms as *neural networks*, *foundational models*, *large language models*, *GPT*, and *diffusion models*, to name just a few.

Another essential concept that needs to be mentioned is the use of *tokens*, “a series of 0s and 1s that represent words, parts of a word, or other data. More tokens imply more vocabulary, context, and nuance, but both the process of turning words into numbers (*tokenization*) and size matters” (p. 21). Bigger models have the capacity to accept millions of words for analysts at a time.

Noteworthy and relevant to the matter at hand are the items in *Glossary II*, dealing with – among others – parameters, transformers, fine-tuning, and agents. Quite appropriate to include for the sake of elucidation is what the authors call *Deep Research*: “a combination of the ability to search the web (or other tools, like a knowledge base) combined with a slower processing and checking of data (sometimes called *reasoning*)” (pp. 22-23). As such, searching has led to “thinking” and “reasoning” with the clear purpose of slowing down and thinking more carefully.

Now that we have at our disposal thousands of GenAI products, models, and tools – according to the authors – the question we need to answer would relate to which models are more creative writers, and which are better at math or video. The suggestion supplied in this project is that “if you want to use one model, the big three (ChatGPT from OpenAI, Gemini from Google, and Claude from Anthropic) still provide the best abilities in one place” (p. 25). Choosing the big three would rely on the most standard features in one place: “reasoning and deep research models, voice, mode, visual mode (to see images and documents), the ability to create images, documents, and code (and run the code), and a mobile app” (p. 25). The counter-argument would also make the users aware that they need to look for the right buttons and drop-downs.

The corollary of this chapter, as an informative source of information, also features a well-developed analysis of the Chinese contribution, touted as competitive through its encouragement and support of AI: “There are a range of powerful Chinese models: Kimi, Qwen, Doubao, Ernie. And Minimax (which also makes a top video: Hailou). The 2025 agent revolution was led by Manus and Genspark, both made by Chinese companies” (p. 27). Additionally, references to Zegart & Johnston (2025), mention a significant factor that explains the Chinese success, namely *inventive training techniques* and *local talent*.

International competition – with its competitive and proliferative aspect – segues from the United States and China to other countries like France, with its open-source Mistral, or Mistral Saba, trained on Arabic sources and the native languages of India” (p. 28). A relevant distinction becomes evident when users are looking for the insight and cultural knowledge of a native speaker, and that is precisely where the Chinese models “reflect the Chinese cultural heritage of their training data” (ibid.). The resulting searches into tentative features usually concentrate on tools with a user-friendly interface, useful and faster than other elaborate custom prompts.

Education as a potential market is scrutinized when names like LearnLM (from Google), ChatGPT Edu (from Open AI), and Tutor Mode (from BoodleBox) are given special treatment in this section of the book. According to some researchers, LearnLM is a version of Gemini used in education to “encourage active learning, manage cognitive load, deepen metacognition, stimulate curiosity, and adapt to learners’ needs” (Jurenka et al., 2024). When AI learns and adapts within a pedagogical framework, interactions and evaluations from students and teachers can only help and enhance the process of learning.

The core tenet of Chapter 2, entitled *A New Era of Work*, can easily be summarized as a new outlook that makes AI a type of revolution that, although eliminating a few aspects of our jobs, will undoubtedly change the nature of work. One of the perks that come with using the new communication systems is that “AI-based conversational assistance improved customer sentiment and reduced requests for managerial intervention” (p. 34). Moreover, such tools have been reported to have increased retention.

Solid research has found a parallel image with similar positive results in the learning realm, mostly in examples of “classroom practice where, in group learning settings, we pair students who are struggling with students who are not. In another study, teams that included an AI teammate reported higher levels of positive emotions and lower levels of negative emotions than human-only teams” (Dell’Acqua et al., 2025; quoted on p. 35). It is obvious that AI has already turned into a new kind of thought partner. Specifically, according to researchers, “AI can be more persuasive than humans”, and “and is better at emotional intelligence” (Li et al., 2024; Schlegel et al., 2025; quoted on p. 35). That implies that now we have a tool that also helps us to improve our relationships and interactions.

The authors further emphasize similar abilities that come with AI and its benefits. Digital care may function as “real-time clinician support” and in doing so, AI will be a reliable assistant in many areas of human thinking and acting. Specifically, digital medical assistants will be offering diagnostic suggestions in real time, transforming diagnosis, procedures, medical services, among other things. Notable in this respect would be the abundance of specialized AI apps available in particular industries, as well as the realm of insurance and finances, where AI is used “to aid with trading decisions, market analysis, credit risk assessment, and regulatory compliance” (p. 40). The same context also mentions that Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, Bank of America, and other banks and investment firms are using tools necessary for everyday tasks.

As outlined in this chapter, the new technology will perform tasks that will enhance the profile of jobs created by the advent of AI. The number of jobs in 2020, according to one source, went up to more than three million people working in IT, and the use of AI might do the same. However, simultaneously, millions of jobs are lost and the trend will continue. In other words, AI will change every job, for better or for worse. When the analysis continues, the authors point out that AI already works faster than many human beings and then they explain why and how: “AI can alphabetize, format, scan, summarize, collate, and

translate at dramatically increased scale and speed” (pp. 44-45). To this we may add that, besides the elimination of tedious human labor, AI is helping with productivity growth, and consequently raising the standard of living.

When we segue to Chapter 3, we find a very attractive presentation of what AI prompting can do. The section starts with a powerful sentence: “Prompting is writing.” As employed here, the acquired skill of prompting implies the following principles: “Prompting is weird,” “Demand more,” “Converse”, “Iterate,” “Provide context,” “Specify expertise,” “Branching,” “Search for Ideas,” “Ask for insight,” and “Small changes can make a difference.” While on one hand underlining the value of asking questions – inherent in prompting – the project acknowledges the fact that “AI can’t read our mind. Yet.” However, as the authors remark, the benefits provided by AI outweigh considerably all other critical thinking skills of asking better questions and evaluating answers.

Creativity and its assets become the central point of the next chapter entitled *Reimagining Creativity*. Starting from the premise that creative quality comes from a quantity of ideas, the authors go on and claim that “Creativity relies on the quantity of *different* and *divergent* ideas. Variations of single ideas are initially less valuable. Both humans and AIs generate new ideas by trying new combinations, but AI can do this at significantly greater speed and quantity.” (p. 71) We can definitely deduce that AI provides thousands and thousands of new ideas and suggestions.

A perfect example of expertise that AI is bringing would be the old concept that “culture helps propel human civilization.” We pass on from generation to generation what our knowledge has accumulated over the years, but there is always a caveat. “Cultural knowledge, however, also included constraints, norms, patterns, rules, strategies, and knowing what not to do or say. How many nascent ideas are killed or never even articulated [...] because we fear of hearing ‘we already tried that?’” (p. 74) Although challenged, analysts keep pressing on and underline the value of education and expertise.

New knowledge acquired by science also leads to new ideas, and, according to Demis Hassabis, “scientific progress might benefit from ‘a little bit of extra intellectual horsepower’” (Klein, 2023, 12:50). By the same token, artists are hired “to create marketing materials, product images, animation, and other visual content using AI” (White, 2023). When tedious and repetitive jobs are masterfully replaced by creative quality and critical thinking, AI is there to assist with its astonishing quantity of ideas.

The value of education is a driving force creating an opportunity to find purpose in life, but also to prepare students for work, and Chapter 5 finds AI having a remarkable impact on campuses and curricula. Many higher education institutions have reached the consensus to work on adding AI literacy as a new learning outcome. When implementing AI literacy definitions and frameworks, certain ethical issues have been discovered, and the chapter lists the following: “bias, hallucination, equity, data privacy, intellectual property, and copyright issues in the creation, use, and access to AI” (p. 94). The solution offered by the authors of this project would be to empower teachers “to determine whether AI transforms education for better or worse” (p. 95). Therefore, AI would be able to provide more feedback to improve the entire learning process, emphasizing the value of creativity and preparing useful materials for students working alone or in groups. The learning process, as viewed from the authors’ perspectives, will undoubtedly challenge teachers to prepare their students to adapt to a new era of AI literacy and thinking.

From the emphasis on thinking in Part I, the current practical guide then switches to Teaching with AI. With its key words of *technique*, *theory*, and *method*, AI has a plethora of research tools “that can help you organize, cite, and interrogate your own sources and files.” Additionally, it clarifies that *ExplainPaper*, for example, “does what it says: When you upload a paper and highlight a confusing passage, it offers explanations in the sidebar” (p. 110). This tool proves to be especially useful when students try to decode a paper on machine learning for a new book on AI.

Another innovative way of integrating AI in education becomes obvious when the book elucidates the issue of simulating test subjects or model experiments, to which we might also add reviewers and publishers using similar tools to enhance creative inspiration. Searching for ideas would be one of the best ways AI can help. With AI, checking for information can be at our fingertips when resorting to several prompts with key words in bold:

Find anything **like this** ...

Has anything **similar** ever developed to a previous student or patient?

Are there other **examples** of this?

Read your draft book and identify all the places where we **repeated an idea**.

Does a background check and scan the Internet for any **red flags** about our job candidates? (p. 121)

Such prompts are also combined with “the ability to scale” and the authors underscore the key reason why AI has a considerable appeal to young learners and teaching staff alike.

The ability to search for ideas might very well be transformative in anybody’s research quest and if necessary, teachers and students will be empowered to deal with *Deep Research*. Optimizing workload and mitigating challenges that come with the process can easily be dealt with when research is also supported by websites called ‘search engines optimized,’ or SEO, “meaning that they have key words for Google to find” (p. 126). As the authors opine, such websites are currently developed and AI comes in handy when you “try something you know well but also something where the data is complicated and diverse and perhaps beyond ordinary human capabilities” (p. 126). If the accompanying research is done accordingly, productivity and quality are the outcome results that transform educational practices.

In the realm of liberal arts education, AI is ready to assist in course preparation, interfacing with students, classroom discussions, assessments and customization, course design, as well as designing new activities and assignments. As the authors

recommend, “AI is best used at the beginning of the workflow for drafts and ideas and at the end for feedback” (p. 130). This powerful tool, if tackled professionally, will equip the students with the skills they need to function in the ever-changing world of technology today. When addressing college professors, this updated second edition suggests effective ways for any discipline or course.

If you ask for ten new ideas, you can then ask for variations or further exploration of the best ideas. You might need to provide additional context: create several variations on this idea for students who have not taken calculus, are nonmajors, or have a keen interest in sports. If you want more creative ideas, you need to ask specifically for that.

At the very least, use AI to get a different perspective on your assignments. (p. 143)

This comprehensive guide continues by asserting that the possibilities offered by AI are endless, and that there might be situations when if at first you don’t succeed, AI will ask you if you want to try again. What was impossible to imagine, let’s say in 1993, now the Internet will find ways for every task that can be better or faster with AI.

The current project is also offering a well-balanced approach when, in Chapter 7, the reader is presented with an extensive analysis of cheating and detection. Student cheating can be better dealt with if we understand the specifics of how AI cheating and AI detectors work. As noted in the book, self-reported survey data shows that, generally, students have admitted to using AI for “summarizing or paraphrasing text,” “answering homework questions,” and “writing large parts of assignment” (Shaw et al., 2023; quoted on p. 155). By 2025, 80-96% of college students acknowledged they used AI in their college work. Some mentioned using Chat-GPT, but others said it should be banned from their college’s network (Study.com, 2023; quoted on p. 155). The question that comes to mind is “If students are using AI to help them brainstorm ideas, outline, analyze, summarize, draft, and even think, should we be happy?” (p. 167) Tactics that might be used to stop cheating would also have their own obstacles and challenges, but the authors mention the following:

Permission to proctor

Bluebooks and a return to handwriting

Testing centers

Oral exams, or what the British call a “viva” (or viva voce)

New assignments and assessment techniques (p. 168)

However, only time will tell if any of these suggestions will work. A similar approach would involve discussing academic integrity, giving integrity quizzes, simply reminding students about academic integrity, or demonstrating detection tools.

According to the authors of this project, “copying AI text is not plagiarism. Legally, plagiarism is taking a *person’s* original work and using it as if it were your own. Using AI might be unethical, but since it is not the original work of a person, there is no injured party” (p. 187). Furthermore, if AI is used to brainstorm, provide outlines, or review drafts, it’s almost impossible to find that student guilty. In the educational process, the next step would be to find a legal and rational solution, accompanied by an open discussion and thorough research about ethics, copyrights, and data privacy.

Grading papers turns out to be a sensitive issue, and the current project underlines the obvious AI advantage: “What makes AI grading more accurate, helpful, and consistent are the same things that ensure good human grading: a clear rubric, awareness of bias, calibration, and a system of quality control” (p. 200), which is also perceived by students as fairer, exactly because of these reasons. Before transitioning to an AI-based grading overflow, we are reminded that there might be several issues to be taken into account. *Accuracy*, *consistency*, and *quality* are absolutely required, followed by having *clear learning goals* and *creating a good rubric*. Writing a prompt, training or calibrating the AI to apply to the rubric, and making sure we have a strategy for control and checking for mistakes can all help teachers and students to work well with AI.

The transformative power of AI is also appraised in the context of feedback, role-playing, and tutors. In the authors’ view, feedback needs to be customized and immediate, as well as “a complement to human feedback, not a replacement” (p. 213). Assignment sheets and ‘ready to submit’ criteria may be practical, and as such, help students get better AI feedback. The best feedback is of tantamount importance when student thinking is challenged, when new perspectives are also included, and if a dialogue could develop to benefit both parties. Nonetheless, we should add another caveat: teachers would “need first to discuss policy, grading, hallucinations, bias, and privacy concerns as well as guidelines for using AI and better prompting” (p. 215). The AI feedback function has the ability to complete an assignment successfully but several items should be required: *role*, *task*, *goal*, *relationship*, and *process*. It follows that teachers can set instructions so when students become frustrated, they should be made aware that there is always AI support that will keep the students challenged and engaged.

Feedback is essential in the learning process mostly because AI can be used as “a consultant, mentor, or a debate partner.” Similarly, AI can act “like a scientist, historian, journalist, patient, coder, client, or consultant” (p. 221). Nevertheless, the general idea presented in this volume is that we need context and specificity. Good feedback ideas will not eliminate advising and monitoring, “but asking AI to adjudicate disagreements might leave both students and you with more time to do other important work” (p. 230). That leading concept will ask faculty to guide how students might learn from using AI feedback. Like group work, asking an AI to work as a facilitator or team coach will undoubtedly help because it involves a core life skill and will eventually enhance learning.

From feedback the book switches to motivation, this psychological driving force that can bring students closer to the final goal of a project if or when they perceive that extra work will prove to be worthwhile. As one researcher avers, “Humans are better motivated by three internal drives summarized as ‘I care,’ ‘I can,’ and ‘I matter’” (Bowen, 2021; quoted on p. 232). In simple terms, understanding the relevance of an assignment can make the concept of motivation the deciding factor to engage.

Building a strong goal-oriented behavior will not eliminate cheating, as clarified by the authors, but building trust will also imply that students should decrease cheating. Instead, when challenged, students should be empowered to try other ways and types of learning. A message of hope becomes visible when all projects start with a clear goal, and when both faculty and students use instructions regarding *what*, *how*, and *when* as a bridge to a better understanding of tasks and their requirements. *What* needs to be done, *how* best to accomplish it, and *when* the project is due constitute essentials in the process. AI can be used to validate this “need to explain and make benefits visible” (p. 237). Now that all assignments are also claimed to be a journey of discovery, students will have to find a balance between extensive work and the best ways to achieve it. In doing so, they will also discover the value of a worthy learning process.

Chapter 13 acknowledges that writing well is a challenging process and students will have to acquire and perfect this skill if they want to develop their human cognitive performance. As noted in this research project, “Writing is a craft. Just as calculators did not eliminate the need for human math, AI will not eliminate the need to write and to write well and with ease, clarity, and voice” (p. 246). Writing is also assigned in order to promote cognitive processing and learning. Students will be able to write and think for themselves, but they may find it time-consuming or overwhelming when trying to find the right words. Although perceived by students as a pointless exercise, in time, they will realize that writing is what AI does best.

Real-time writing, journaling in a bot, and interview-based writing are some of the practical examples of using AI to boost the students’ writing ability. For example: Journals can be used as a record of thinking, and “its value is in the immediacy and authenticity of the thoughts recorded” (p. 252). Another good example would be spontaneous conversations leading to short essays. Additionally, writing “a profile/letter to an important relative/birthday tribute for the person interviewed” can be viewed as writing for and about a peer, which also involves and emphasizes motivation.

Whether AI can assist with prewriting or with feedback, students might be motivated and consequently getting engaged, the suggestion coming from the authors of the book would be to make students aware of what AI tools can or cannot be used in written assignments and why. Students benefit even more from AI when, for example, arguments are articulate, when better evidence is found, with counter-arguments anticipated, and, in the process, creativity will bring a broader perspective. AI thus becomes a personalized writing tutor, guiding students to revising and rewriting, also deemed to be necessary if AI is to raise standards.

The primary focus of teaching, as Bell Hooks is quoted to say, “is not on what we teach, but on the quality of the learning experience we create” (p. 292). Going back to motivation, Bowen and Watson assert that greater trust and clear instructions will reduce cheating, but unfortunately, AI will also lead to better ways to cheat. The best solution so far, as proclaimed by the authors, is to use custom bots. According to analysts, “students find simulations more compelling, relevant, and connected to the real world” (O’Neill & Short, 2025; quoted on p. 293). Good simulation, in this case, involves creating the prompt that might be the heart of the bot.

If a good prompt is used, turning it into a custom bot is not difficult. Several steps are suggested, beginning with picking a platform, all with various names: “ChatGPT has GPT, Gemini has Gems, Hugging Face has Assistants, Poe has Bots” (p. 296), but the project recommends resorting to an educational platform like BoondleBox, Kanmigo, or a campus Learning Management System (LMS), which will show the teachers what students do with the bots. After a bot is created, built, or configured, a title and description will be added, and a prompt is also pasted. The next step would be to find a field or tab for the knowledge base – source documents, a chapter, or text. If the knowledge base is appropriate, the students will be offered a link. The best place to start is “to create a course bot with syllabus, text, readings, slides, worksheets, and assignments as its knowledge base” (p. 297). This will give students the ability to upload the syllabus and ask an AI to put the deadlines into a calendar and construct a study schedule.

In education, the best scenarios and their challenges usually come with a learning curve. Therefore, the current tome stresses the importance of demonstrating how to use the course bot at the beginning of each semester. If we want our students to improve their scores and to be better prepared for class, a good example would be AI Tutor Pro from the nonprofit Contact North in Ontario. “Students can either specify a topic, a difficulty level, and a language or upload specific content and then get AI tutoring” (p. 298). Bots can be created to tutor on a specific topic or assignment. Simultaneously, “Another bot approach might offer a specific type of support like understanding bias, increasing reflection, planning research, managing time, or connecting ideas across disciplines” (p. 299). Simple and easy steps will lead to a better learning goal and outcome.

The highlights of the Epilogue concentrate on the impact of using AI in the future, keeping track of the main idea that research will continue to develop new ways of increasing the capabilities of technology as a teaching and learning tool for both students and their teachers. Now that AI is here, the advice coming from the authors of this monumental work is “to start playing and working with AI” (p. 319). Among the many these supportive messages the project mentions the following: “AI is a tool that can elevate the creativity and productivity of everyone,” “Faculty need to adapt with new policies, assignments, assessments and curricula: AI detection will not be enough nor entirely dependable,” and “All students will need AI literacy and will need to be able to use AI as a partner and collaborator for career and life success” (pp.319-320). Successful implementation of new strategies will ultimately lead to a more effective instruction, although the discussion will generate new questions regarding high-impact practices that will engage faculty and students alike.

In conclusion, the second edition of *Teaching with AI* expands its initial purpose with a thorough analysis of the power of AI as it is currently updated and improved for the common benefit of educators and students. The new changes in thinking and teaching constitute a step forward in the learning process, with obvious consequences beyond the classroom usage. The book offers innovative ideas that can be integrated to facilitate a practical and creative transition to a new era of AI in the realm of

advanced technology. Well-balanced and articulate – showing the AI assets and well as its disadvantages – the theoretical and the practical examples will be extremely useful to faculty and students as they prepare to tackle the challenges posed by the new tools that we all expect to improve our knowledge, standards of living, and communication not only with AI, but also with ourselves.

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