[Auto-generated transcript. Edits may have been applied for clarity.]
As you all know, we've been working for now several months to unpack and begin to explore what

we think about when we talk about the words assessment for deeper learning.

We're interested, of course, in pedagogy, and we're interested in curriculum or interested in all sorts of reforms related to schools.

But we like to think about assessment for deeper learning as a focal point.

Today, we're incredibly fortunate to have two scholars who are going to help bring us through the topic.

The topic is "Writing to think and thinking to write: Teaching new teachers

writing in the age of artificial intelligence."

Our panelists are Dr. Bronwyn LaMay and Dr. Scott Jarvie,

both of whom are affiliated with San José State and have been working on all sorts of questions related to teacher education, teacher preparation.

And now, in the age of AI have some thoughts to share with us.

Of course, as usual, today's talk will be moderated by Dr. Carrie Holmberg and myself,

and we look forward to the journey over the next 60 minutes to get a better feel for what's going on in the field itself,

and also to recognize that it's an evolving field with lots of different things that are happening.

So we look forward to coming back to this conversation sometime in the near future.

Before we get started today, I just want to remind everybody how we center this work around assessment for

deeper learning and what deeper learning basically means from our point of view.

Deeper learning has something to do with the skills and knowledge that students must or can possess to succeed in 21st century jobs in civic life.

We think of college and career as a part of that story, but we also like to think about workplace collaboration,

critical thinking skills, problem solving, communication,

basically being able to use what they've learned and what they know from their education to find and

evaluate and synthesize and even frame the knowledge that they have and apply it to new contexts.

We also think that deeper learning is always going to be connected to assessment for deeper learning,

because part of the game here and what we're trying to work out with our students is how to have

them prioritize assessing their own critical thinking and their own problem solving skills,

and their own collaboration efforts and communication.

And this is, of course, going to be situated for many of our high school and middle school teachers and thinking about core content,

whether they are an arts teacher, whether they're a music teacher, physical education teacher, English language arts teacher, and on and on.

The work of assessment for deeper learning and deeper learning itself will always be based in formative and

continuous improvement models for supporting students and the work that they produce in the settings that we provide.

Carrie? Thank you, Brent. It's my pleasure to introduce our guests today.

And I'll start with Bronwen LaMay. Bronwen LaMay, PhD, has been a teacher, instructional coach and administrator for over 20 years in the Bay area.

She has taught middle and high school English in Oakland, Hayward, East San José, and Santa Clara.

She has her PhD from Stanford in English and Literacy curriculum,

her MA from Mills College in Educational Leadership and her BA in English from UCLA.

A few years ago, she published what began as a literacy curriculum that she co-created with her students.

It revolved around their self narratives on the topic of love and Toni Morrison's "Song of Solomon."

The book, "Personal Narrative, Revised: Writing Love and Agency in the High School Classroom" was awarded NCTE's David H.

Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English for 2017.

Bronwen currently lectures in the Departments of English and Teacher Education at San José State,

and has worked with the San José Area Writing Project as a teacher consultant for several years prior to becoming its director.

Scott Jarvie, Ph.D. Scott is an assistant professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San José State,

where he teaches courses in English education for graduate students pursuing a teaching credential.

A former director of the San José Area Writing Project, Scott joined the faculty at SJSU after receiving his PhD in curriculum,

instruction, and teacher education at Michigan State University, where he helped with the Red Cedar Writing Project.

He's the author of "Affect Learning and Teacher Education: Getting Stuck in Social Justice"

written with Erica Colmenares.

Prior to graduate study, Scott taught high school literature and creative writing courses in the Rio Grande Valley and in the city of Chicago.

Well, as you can see, we're in very good hands today and it's going to be really exciting to talk to our colleagues and learn more about

what they think and what they're thinking about regarding the work that they do on a daily basis at San José State.

We've identified five basic big questions that we're going to play with over the next hour.

And we know that these questions are of varying difficulty and

challenge, and we know that there will be a collaborative conversation around each.

But let me just quickly review them before Carrie takes us through moderating the questions one by one.

First of all, we're interested in what are the most common misconceptions that middle and high school students have about writing as a process,

and how do you address them in your teaching? We're interested in writing as a process and how it's often described as cyclical

involving pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing.

So we ask, how do you encourage students to embrace the iterative nature of writing, rather than focusing on producing a perfect first draft?

With the advancement, rapid advancement of AI,

Do you think these technologies are changing the way students write and the way teachers teach writing?

What are the potential upsides and downsides of AI in developing students as writers?

And last but not least. Looking ahead, what are your predictions for the future of writing education in light of AI advancements?

And what advice would you give to teachers who are feeling a little overwhelmed, or perhaps uncertain about how to adapt to AI in today's classroom?

All right, Carrie. The rest is yours. All right.

Thank you. Brent. We'll jump right in with this question. What are the most common misconceptions

middle and high school students have about writing as a process?

And how do you address them in your teaching? And we could say your teaching of students, right.

And your teaching of new teachers. It depends how you want to take it.

Bronwyn. Start us off, please. All right.

So I feel like this question actually is kind of at the center of a lot of how I work with new teachers and how I work with students

both. I feel like a lot of students have been collecting data on this for the last many years.

Just asking kids: do you see yourself as a writer? What does it mean to be a writer?

The majority of kids starting around middle school and definitely into high school say: I'm not a writer, whatever that is.

I'm not one. And they didn't feel that way when they were younger.

I've worked with a lot of kids who saw themselves as creators, as artists, as people who wrote for fun, you know?

And I think it's around middle school when a lot of that joy gets killed.

There is a sense of writing is a is a task, right?

There's a certain kind of text that you're being asked to produce.

And it becomes much more about the process of a certain kind of text than it does about writing to include a thought,

writing to articulate a thought, writing to communicate a thought. The sense of coherence, right?

Where I'm taking the thought and building another thought on it.

The process that I would hope for students to have gets lost in the sense of what is this rubric asking me to do?

What is this formula asking me to do right? I need to show that I can produce a paper in this format with these skills attached.

And a lot of districts have kind of adopted the Common Core standards in that way and created

a scope and sequence across the grade levels where ninth grade students will write this, this and this, and then in 10th grade...

And while I think there is value to students understanding structure and organization,

it's the idea that thoughts can shape a structure, right that gets lost.

What happens a lot is that students lose their sense of actually thinking in the process.

They become voiceless, right?

They're writing in a weird, abstract, if third person voice, if they don't fully understand, rules are presented.

It's kind of these, these lines you may not cross. Right. You may not use "I"--nobody knows why, right?

I just need to write in the most convoluted and abstract way possible.

And I guess that's what academic writing is. So I think kids lose this as a process, as being something that's organic to their thinking.

To address this in my teaching, I really try to help make that metacognitive part of the process as visible as I can with young people.

Whether that's through a process of taking pieces of text and sorting them inductively and thinking about the relationships

between ideas and the idea that writing is essentially about building and articulating relationships between ideas,

that's coherence. Right? But with teachers as well.

I mean, I start by surfacing a lot of the negative experiences that they had as students with this kind of approach to writing.

And what I've realized in teaching at San José State is 90% of the new teachers I work with are like, yes, that was me.

I just never knew I could say so. I never knew that I could talk about the fact that I came to see myself as someone who was definitely not a writer.

Right. And so we think about this idea of, you know,

proof of performance and writing to please a certain set of standard that you're being

held to versus writing in a way that you actually have ownership over your ideas,

you have ownership over the shape they take. You have a sense of ownership over your own work as being something that you're really

trying to communicate as you enter a larger conversation on a real world topic.

Yeah. Thank you. Bronwyn. You, at the beginning of your response, you, I don't know if you used the word "joy."

Right? But you talked about in middle school, like the students, the kind of the pleasure.

gets killed some way. Right? Can you speak to the students you teach that are going to become teachers, and they're saying,

as you just told us, "I never knew I could kind of say out loud, 'I'm not a writer.'"

And yet, these are the ones who are going to be teaching the next generation of kids to be writers. Mix these ideas of loss, of joy and writing

and these new teachers, I just have a sense you have some thoughts on that.

Yeah. I mean, one of the premises of the writing project, right,

is the idea that if we see ourselves as writers, as teachers, we will teach writing differently, right?

We will not minimize it.

And restricted to the idea of, here's the text you need to produce, because this is what we do at this point in the curriculum, right?

In a way that students become very dis-attached and disengaged.

And some students that I've worked with will opt out of those kinds of assignments.

They'll just say, no, this doesn't feel relevant or meaningful to me.

And I think for a lot of teachers, it's being able to recognize the empathy that they actually feel for that and being able to say,

wait a second, I want to see myself as a writer as well as a teacher.

I want to have a sense of craft. I want to have a sense that writing is a practice for me.

Right. I want to have. It says that there's something valuable in the experience of writing itself, right?

Not just the text that is produced at the end of it.

And that that experience itself, there can be something very uplifting

or joyful or transformative about it.

If we are allowed to engage in a process that

allows us to feel that we have a voice and that we are really trying to figure out how to work through something real to us.

And there's joy in that.

Can I just say that when you speak about this so passionately about writing as a process, I start to think about the dance curriculum.

I start to think about the art curriculum.

I start to think about the music curriculum that, that when we talk about having our teachers who are teaching these subjects,

we really want them, as you just said, to think of it as a practice, but an art form too.

Yes,. They're engaged in the process of creation, no?. Absolutely.

I mean, I think that the way that we kind of make writing very technical, right, and tedious at that, loses a sense that writing is also an art.

And that there's a creativity to art, right? Artists need a certain sense of autonomy, right?

A certain sense of ownership over their own work. And that gets lost very quickly in the way that school kind of becomes this March through

certain standards that align with certain grade levels.

I worked with a student last year as an undergraduate.

She was a senior who was writing about, you know,

being in the rigorous class at her high school where there's a lot of pride that sometimes we feel in how rigorous we are.

But, you know, for defining rigor in this set of, you know, to do's, right?

We read this much, we write this much, as opposed to rigor being depth of thought.

She says, I became the automated version of ChatGPT. I mean, I was just producing, right?

And the artistry is lost.

This was a young woman who had a beautiful lyrical writing style, but that was never the point of a lot of the writing she was asked to do.

Thank you. Bronwyn. Scott, I know you have some thoughts on this.

Starting with the common misconceptions. Right. And again, your interpretation of students let us know which students you're talking about,

whether it's middle and high school students or the graduate students that you teach at San José State.

Absolutely. I'm already really enjoying where this conversation is going.

Uh, Brent, I particularly appreciated that sort of move towards thinking about writing as a creative act.

I think one common misconception is that writing tends to be framed, uh, pretty narrowly.

Bronwen talks about the Common Core State Standards.

I'm often thinking about this with respect to secondary English students,

middle and high school English students, with whom my teacher education students work.

But even I think that you see that narrow conception carried into university work as well

where writing is framed primarily as about making an argument is reframed

It's framed rhetorically, in the sort of genres that are perceived as academic and valued in our institutions.

But I think that there's really good work that we can do as educators to push writing beyond that,

to think about writing as both a creative act and something that can be playful,

something that there can be joy in, in thinking about

the kinds of artistic moves we can create and the kinds of things that we can generate through artistic choices

but also as a, as a personal act, as a, as an opportunity for personal inquiry,

for expression, for developing the kind of voice that Bronwyn is talking about.

To that end, one major misconception I think about

is sort of embedded in the framing of the theme of this webinar today: "thinking to write, writing to think."

I often talk to students about about Elaine Richardson, a great writing researcher who has

a quote that I've always loved. I'm going to have to paraphrase it here.

She writes that writing is not the transfer of your thoughts to the page, but writing is rather the sight of thought itself.

That's something that I think is really useful for reframing writing, as itself an inquiry process.

Right? As a space in which, we come to the page and we often find ourselves surprised by what we encounter there and what happens

in terms of what we write, but also what happens to us in this process, how we we come to be changed by the process of sitting down and trying to,

think about, think, think through writing.

And I think with writing...so the writing project might be a good example of this.

You know, the writing project is a space where Bronwyn and I are working with experienced teachers,

mostly people who are already in the field and are working every day in classrooms themselves in the South Bay area, primarily.

But the kinds of writing that we do as part of the writing project are not typically

the kinds of genres that are producing a product that is useful necessarily. They don't have clear audiences,

or even clear purposes to the writing. They are... it is writing that is designed to provide inquiry for teachers.

It's designed to open a space in which they can write to make sense of their practice,

not as a letter to their principal or to their students necessarily,

but rather as a space for themselves, for them to be able to, like, develop as a professional educator.

So we really value that notion of writing as process and writing as he sight of thought.

One other thing I think about as a common misconception, both with K–12 students and with my university students studying to become teachers...

And I think it's just worth articulating here...

They really do see writing as a sort of mono modal activity that is primarily a matter of print alphabetic composition.

So one of the things I'm trying to do as a teacher educator is open writing up beyond that to work with the really rich

body of research over the last few decades on multimodality and thinking about writing.

As you know, especially like writing in digital spaces today, for example, as happening or as involving

artistic media beyond, beyond sort of print composition.

So thinking about working with images,

thinking about working with...I just went to a really wonderful workshop here, Joseph Navarro, a faculty member

colleague in the English department put on about short form video

and thinking about short form video as, as a writing process, product and process.

So I often find myself trying to frame writing in a capacious way, frame writing as a multi multimodal act

in order to sort of speak to the ways that people like youth and people outside of academia are composing today.

Thank you. Scott. Just fantastic.

All right. Our next question is this.

Writing as a process is often described as cyclical, involving pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing.

Right. You could name slightly different. gerunds in there.

But it does suggest its cyclical little nature.

How do you encourage students to embrace the iterative nature of writing,

rather than on focusing what we think commonly happens, of just students producing a perfect first draft?

Bronwyn? Sure. So, I mean, we can think of the idea of producing a perfect first draft or even a perfect final draft as maybe not making sense.

I mean, I know even in the writing of a dissertation, right, or any paper that I spend a lot of time on, I land where I land with it.

In a certain point, it is what it is, and I know I will look back on it at some point and my thinking will have evolved.

Right? And I often describe it to students as, you know, you're trying to kind of land this somewhere, right?

And at a certain point you work with where it's landed.

Right? And maybe your views on this topic will be different at some point.

I mean, ideally, revision is ongoing, right? Revision is more of a life process than the act of correcting grammatical errors on a page.

Right? It's the sense that I'm going to continue to think about this issue,

and I'm going to continue to reflect on how my thoughts are evolving on this.

Right? So I actually really want see this, understand that any real piece of writing that they do will have that nature to it.

There isn't a sense of it being frozen in a place of perfection, per se, right?

But again, you know, this idea that it is cyclical, involving pre-writing, drafting, revising, you know,

that idea that there's a thought process here that I want to make as visible and as metacognitive as possible, I think is a huge part of it.

One of the things that we do a lot in my class is we talk.

What does it mean to talk as part of a writing process?

Right? As part of a way of figuring out where you think you stand on something.

Right? Because ideally, writing is a way of fleshing out what we don't fully yet think we know.

Right? And as we write, we get a sense of, wait a minute, this is actually what I think I know.

Like, this is actually what I think I can say. So there is something the writing is thinking, right?

And, you know, one of the things that I think happens to kids a lot is they're assessed based on

the grammar and the format of the writing, but the idea that they're trying to communicate can easily get lost.

Right? And one of the things that I have students do with their drafts is actually share with each other

not from the stance of peer editing or peer assessment, but really descriptive feedback.

Right? What does it mean to learn to give descriptive feedback?

And there's research to show that when we when we try to mirror back to somebody the writerly moves

we see them making, we try to take the angle of

what are they trying to do here? We grow as writers, too, because then we're thinking in this writerly way,

we start to develop a sense of writer's identity from both having people give us descriptive feedback,

sharing with us the writerly moves that they see us making that maybe we didn't even know we were making,

but also trying to do that for somebody else. I think a lot of times

we think of feedback as purely evaluative, right.

Here's the grade, here's what you did or didn't do.

Well but what does it mean to really engage with the person's work from the standpoint of active listening?

Right? To really read with someone instead of against them.

And a lot of students don't have that experience. I think they are used to being read against.

Right. And so they develop a little bit of a defensive posturing, even in the writing process itself.

So all of this, I think, is part of what it means to work with students to the pre-writing and drafting and

revising part is thinking about all of the different forms that feedback can take.

Right? Ways that we can really try to hear and enter into some of these texts and understand their truth and

help them see themselves as a writer who's trying to do something real and trying to do something hard.

And as students push outside their comfort zone with language, they will make growth errors.

And I think recognizing, "Okay, wait, this is happening because this kid is trying to push beyond their comfortable

doing" and being able to mirror that back as opposed to, "No, this is incorrect."

Right. A really different ways of engaging with some of these work.

So I'll leave it there. All right.

Scott. Uh, sure.

So, this question of how do we encourage students to embrace the iterative nature of writing?

When I look at this process, these different,these different practices, right.

Pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing.

I mean, the first thing comes to mind is I think we need to teach these genres if we expect students to do them and we want to encourage them, right.

So we need to spend time in classrooms working through what these look like,

providing models of it, providing a space in which students can practice and get feedback.

I think our participation as educators in that process is really important, right?

Not just come in at the end and look at the product, but instead throughout, be responsive to what students are doing.

As Bronwyn talked about, right? Giving, giving really strong feedback.

But at each level, when we engage with something as a teacher, we signal its value to students.

Right. So, I think that that's one way that we can definitely encourage it.

A big thing to me it's it's maybe an obvious one, butI think it's, I think we have to remind ourselves how valuable this is

it's to make space for this work in the classroom. Right? So if we want to value this process, we provide students with time.

To do this, we need to, we need to assign it and we need to account for it in our curriculum in the way that we

and the way that we make requests of students.

Right. And and communicate our expectations to them. We also need to value it in, the way that we assess it and our grading process.

Right? I think about this as a K–12 teacher, if I want to signal to students that this is important,

one way I can do that is to assign a grade as part of it

rather than just grading the final product,

creating assignments along the way that signal to students that this is part of the work that you want to value in the classroom.

And the other thing I was thinking about, so I said to make space,

to make space to do it, but also to make space to think about this process and perhaps to rethink it, too.

So one issue I personally have encountered as a writer is a feeling that the process that I go through does not sometimes mirror this cycle

strictly. It often can be messier than this and go in different directions and I can find myself returning to things or skipping steps.

That's part of the art and craft of writing that I think we want to make sure that we

frame writing, the writing process, in a way that that communicates that to students,

rather than locking them into a kind of rigid, linear, step-by-step process.

So one conversation that I often have with my students is about outlining, which is a common pre-writing practice, right?

For organizing, organizing, writing.

And we look at a variety of different perspectives and talk about our own experiences with those things.

So, you know, we, hear from from writers, from students,

and kind of expert writers who for whom writing or outlining is an essential part of their process.

And they talk about how it provides them with this roadmap for the piece of writing they're working on.

and it's invaluable in that way.

We also hear from people for whom outlining is a, is something that inhibits their work.

that actually can make it difficult.

That's actually, often how I feel as a writer, that, that outlining is something that, when I do it,

I find that it can make the inquiry or the writing, worse, for the ways that sort of like I find myself trapped sometimes.

That seems like a very, a very laden and and fraught and problematic

place to unpack with your students and

a great place to start when you're making a point about writing as a process.

You'll notice we didn't say "the writing process", we say writing as a process.

Yeah. Thank you. Scott. And thank you, Bronwyn.

Let's move to the next question. This one is about AI. With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence,

do you think these technologies are changing the way students write and the way teachers teach writing?

Bronwyn? Well, I think it depends.

I think it's raised a lot of questions and a lot of dilemmas around

what needs to be a human part of the process of teaching and learning and what is okay.

Sorry. There's a bell.

The bells are loud. What is okay to outsource?

Right? You know, the funny thing is, the first time I ever really recognized

something that was AI-generated as something that was being turned in by a student.

It was high school, and I had, we had done a whole unit on social media.

And I had asked my students a write an op-ed piece around, their views on social media, actually.

Right? So I wanted an argument, I wanted a point of view, I wanted the "I," I wanted, whatever passion they could bring to it.

And I had a student write this whole paragraph talking about social media this and social media that,

and then he moved into a paragraph that said, "So I will let you know that that entire paragraph I just wrote about was generated by AI."

"And let me talk to you about what I think." Right? And it was really interesting because of course, he wasn't just using AI to do his paper

for him.

He was actually writing something on AI to then take a step back and say, here's what I did.

Here's, you know, my personal thoughts in addition to that.

So I think, do I think there's potential for AI to be a tool that can be used creatively?

Absolutely. Am I concerned that AI can kind of be an outsourcing of the thought process we were talking about earlier?

Absolutely. And again, that sense of being a thinker, that, to me, is kind of essential to what it means to be a writer, right?

So I do think that there is a way that, when the thinking is outsourced, that can definitely change the way that students write.

Can AI change the way that teachers teach writing?

Absolutely. I just worked with a teacher last week.

She visited my class. She teaches AP. Right? She visited my undergrad class, and she did an activity with us where she got us into groups.

Right? And each group had three papers to look at. Two were generated by AI, and one was human written.

And our task was to try to figure out which. And we struggled with it.

We really struggled with it.

And then we had to kind of sit there and look at what are the elements of this paper that made us maybe think it was AI-generated.

What are the elements of this paper that made us think it was human? So did it lead to a deep conversation around what writing is?

Yes. And then a sense of what AI can offer and what AI cannot offer.

Right. We tend to project onto these large language models the idea that they think and feel, right?

They don't think. They don't feel. It's not. I mean, to use John Warner's words, it's not the same as encountering a human intelligence, right?

Not the same as encountering the human spirit. So do I think there are things that AI is not capable of producing for us?

Absolutely. And I think we can have these conversations with students, but I think it's important THAT we have these conversations with students

if we are going to bring AI into our classroom as a tool.

I'm glad that you brought that up, Bronwyn, about, you know

It's important to have the conversations with these students.

Because my recent fieldwork has taken me into a couple of high schools to talk with students and to a person, they were struggling.

They weren't struggling. They just had their rules about when they would use AI and when they wouldn't.

And when I asked them, well, did anyone give you guidance on that? To a person

They said, no. They weren't talking to siblings, they weren't talking to teachers.

They just had come up with this on their own.

So yeah, I just wanted to underscore that point that you brought up.

How about you, Scott, with this question of AI and writing and changing the way students write and the way teachers teach writing?

Yeah. I think that AI is being used, as far as I can tell, widely by students to complete writing assignments in their courses.

That's from reports from the students who I work with who are in teaching placements themselves in this area,

as well as speaking with actual high school high school students in particular today.

I know it's something that the teachers who I work with are trying to learn how to teach,

really struggle with feeling like, you know, to Brandon's point,

feeling like the work of writing is being outsourced and therefore the thinking and learning

that might occur through writing is being outsourced to these technologies.

So, I mean, one maybe obvious shift that I see that I'll share here is that

I think you're seeing a shift towards analog technology as a way to sort of get away from the

increasing omnipresence of these technologies and the availability of them that students have in the classroom.

But I think something that is encouraging to me about this is that I think it is putting

renewed urgency on asking questions of educational foundations, questions of the purposes of our work.

What is the point of teaching writing? Why are we writing?

The kinds of things that we're talking about here are questions that I did not get a chance to talk about

as a student myself in a classroom, a K–12 student, certainly.

and I think in many ways we've seen them pushed aside and educational research discourse in favor of questions of effectiveness,

questions of implementation, questions of what are best practices for meeting standards

rather than sort of rethinking what is what is the purpose of those standards, and what are we ultimately trying to do in these classrooms.

So I think that that kind of, those kinds of conversations are going to become

absolutely essential in the classroom if we're going to frame writing in ways that students

in ways that students are going to engage with, it as inquiry and thought rather than as process that they... or as

as a product that they need to produce, as something that they need to perform in order to get through it.

So I think that's a really...that is an exciting kind of silver lining to the space that we're in right now.

Scott, I want to pick up on your sharing about the way in which philosophical foundations and educational foundations

kind of the big questions about, you know, "Why?" are now on the table.

Ironically, it's the technology that's made it safe to not talk about philosophical problems and challenges in the education space,

it wasn't philosophy itself. And so I think we are and we're hearing in Carrie and I's work on a current book that we're doing on AI and education

a lot of teachers saying that these are opportunities that they've never had to really

sit down with students and kind of not just get into the game of cat and mouse catching

cheating, or catching those who feel that they don't have enough time in the day with all the assignments

they have NOT to use ChatGPT to be able to get an assignment back to an English teacher.

But really deepening the conversation with the students about voice, about agency, about who we are, why we write.

So that's, I think, profoundly interesting. But I also would say, as a colleague of yours, Scott, and Bronwyn's and Carrie's that right now,

the CSU, that is the California State University system with over 23 campuses,

has just built a partnership with OpenAI to provide ChatGPT to every single faculty,

staff and student on our campus across all campuses to make it a ubiquitous part of our lives.

And so there's this idea also that what we're teaching teachers is to, I think, give opportunities to be themselves and to create new space.

At the same time, when people go to work and their workplace,

increasingly, they're being given these sort of solutions and they're being asked to utilize these solutions in quotes.

And so I really wonder, it's not only about, for me, teaching the way teachers write,

it's also the way in which we are being shaped by the workplaces we're in, some of which may allow us to be more philosophical,

and others who may demand much more quick, fast, efficient, formulaic responses.

Not only the email, but possibly the other kinds of writing within the actual discipline itself or the corporation culture, whatever it is.

So I'm just wondering if you guys are seeing any of that to, like this sense of even at the university now

we're being asked to openly embrace ChatGPT because it's now going to be on every one of our platforms.

What does that mean for us as employees of the universities, as teachers of teachers, as professors who do research with

this field. Can we escape it?

I don't know, I'm always a believer that, ultimately, you know, an instructor has

some domain, some level of domain over their classroom and has a space that they can,

you know, the administration is not necessarily dictating what's going on, and you can frame conversations in ways that you want.

So I think that that's really well put.

And this is something I've been thinking about a lot and what this is going to mean for our work.

I think about workplace pressure.

It makes me rethink not just the foundations of K–12 education, but also of collegiate study.

What is the work that we're doing here? Is this primarily about preparation to enter the workforce?

Is there still a space for personal formation in a broader sense of the kind of

education that maybe historically has been the purview of liberal arts education?

Is that a possibility in the 21st century university in 2025?

Where does that happen in this space?

Is this about preparing people to go into the corporate world?

Or is it about preparing them to go into other spaces? Is it also about preparing them to do other things than just be a worker and understand their

development and their education in a broader sense?

I definitely I am committed to the latter.

The work I do is

in no small part workforce preparation. Right. I'm a teacher educator.

I understand that my my role is to prepare, teacher... people to become secondary English teachers.

But I think that what is valuable about education and English education in particular is that it can speak to,

it can speak to a person beyond that kind of very narrow definition of who they are.

Right? So this is something that, you know, they rolled this ChatGPT-CSU initiative out fairly recently

it's something I still have to come to terms with myself. I'm thinking about it

in terms of my engagement with the field of English education and in terms of what people need in their Bay Area schools and California schools,

rather than necessarily what the sort of initiative at the systemwide level is for the California State University.

So it is not something that has driven much curricular change yet, although I think it's something that I we'll have to engage with.

It will be interesting to see. I have a pretty clear AI policy in my courses right now in which I don't allow students to,

um, I do not allow students to use them as part of their

process for the course beyond two distinct sessions in which we're engaging with AI and which they will be using those technologies.

But I wonder if that will change as this technology gets taken up

more widely by faculty here and also by students and maybe in spaces

beyond the university.

You know, Scott, the reason I mention that is because I think if we look at systems of education in the United States,

we can imagine fairly strong distinctions between different parts of systems, for example, tertiary versus secondary.

We think of what goes on in the collegiate space is quite different than what goes on in the

let's call it the TK-12 space.

And it used to be that it was really accountability for K-12, accountability for the students and the teachers who worked in those spaces.

And we left our universities for free of any accountability work.

There's no standardized test or Common Core curriculum for higher education.

But the great leveler seems to now be, everybody

whether you're a professor, whether you're a kindergarten teacher, it does not matter...

will be facing some kind of AI shaping force, either at the school level, either at the level of your department,

either at the level of your individual practice, maybe where you go to train as a teacher and learn.

So I just brought that out for us to think about that.

Really, this is a philosophical conversation that's emerging,

but it could also be a new form of accountability in the sense that it won't be through the front door,

it'll be through the back door, because everything that we do is being captured.

So I just put that out there as a side birdwalk point that we can hold for a future conversation as we learn more,

Scott, together about this. Thank you, Carrie, for letting me throw a couple ideas in there.

Of course, of course. That's what this forum is for.

And actually, it's a good time for me to remind and invite the registrants or the participants who are with us out there in zoom land,

if you'd like to put a question into the Q&A, go right ahead to do that.

While Brent moved us on to our next question about the upsides and downsides of AI.

So what are the potential upsides and downsides of AI in developing students as writers?

You've talked a little bit, Scott, about this, but flesh it out as much as you wish to.

Yeah. So my primary concern, as noted, is that kind of outsourcing of the work.

I think that the writing, you know, as the, the framing of this, we started off right thinking about writing as process.

There is value in the experience of writing. That is where I would say the majority of learning occurs.

That is where people grow and are able to engage with these thoughts.

And insofar as some of that process is being taken away by students' engagement with, you know, we use AI as a kind of umbrella term,

but like generative AI, chat bots in particular, to immediately produce the product, they're missing out on that opportunity.

Right. So an exercise metaphor is sometimes useful.

You can drive a mile in the car, in a car, but that's not the same thing as running a mile

and the process of it. Right?

And I think that there is something

that is valuable there. There are things that people find that are valuable about the experience of running itself.

It's not about traveling the distance so much as it is about going through that process.

How might we think about, right, how can we frame writing in ways that

are valuable to students that process?

I would be remiss if I didn't note that there's a number of externalities associated

with AI that I think get brushed aside sometimes that we should be thinking about, right?

Ethical and legal issues around copyright use, and also environmental impacts of these technologies and data privacy issues too.

So, Brent, I really appreciated...I would love to think more about that together

this idea of like accountability occurring through this and the kind of mass data capture that is involved with these AI technologies.

We know that they, they survive on the consumption of data, they grow on the consumption of data.

And as educators who are engaging with this

we should we should not be naive to the reality of that roll of ChatGPT involving a lot of data gathering from CSU students and faculty.

I think that

we need to be thinking about those as downsides in addition to what to me is a pretty significant obstacle to learning

that AI presents to students in the classroom.

In terms of potential upsides, I think this is incredibly powerful technology.

I think it's... that's evident to anyone who is engaged with this work.

So with that great power, I think that there is potential for

how that sort of might transform how people engage with language.

I think that we are still in really early stages of that being studied and

theorized in ways that are really going to be supportive of work in pedagogical work in classrooms.

So I think we need to wait a little bit. I think we have to be kind of

wary of the hype surrounding a lot of this technology.

And we need to look instead for

more careful and measured and distant from industry studies that can

give us a real sense of what this, of the value of this in the classroom.

I always remind my students that these technologies, something like ChatGPT was not developed as an educational technology.

So we should, we should have a healthy, what some researchers have called a "techno skepticism" towards it.

Because of that reality there is a lot of power in it, I think.

And the other potential upside is, sort of engagement with what's happening beyond the classroom as

as Brent and Carrie have gestured towards earlier.

If this is something that is happening in the world then

our teaching is better when we ask students to engage with these powerful forces rather than cordon them off.

Scott, so when you say that about our teaching, is it better when we engage with these?

I want to connect to that and bring up because this is about upsides and downsides of AI,

I mentioned those students at a local high school, area high school, regional high school.

They were telling me when they used generative AI to help them with assignments and when they didn't.

And what became clear is that in their decision making process, they were really judging

how much did the teacher get creative in coming up with this assignment and this sense that

if the teacher were just kind of phoning it in then and they labeled it as busywork, they had no qualms with having AI do their busywork for them.

And so this sense of like

that would seem that

students' use of AI would push teachers to come up with better assignments for their students

and I would say, and then how can they do that without engaging with AI themselves?

Because they would need to know its limitations and and be aware to make it creative use of AI

not just something coming up with a final draft.

Whether that were in... and I'm not just speaking about... today we're talking about writing, the teaching of writing.

But this was in another subject areas as well.

So your thoughts on any of what I just said? Oh, I think that's a that's a wonderful point.

It brings those contradictions and those failures into relief in ways that might push the field of education in the long term forward.

Absolutely. I think that strangely Educational Foundations is not, you know,

it's something we've often looked past because it's very inconvenient and because there aren't

clear answers and because it's hard to study these things and it often becomes ultimately political,

which I mean, in a good way, but it also sort of gets to a place where we have impasses and we can't resolve these things.

So insofar as I might push us back towards that

and towards these sort of philosophical questions, I do think that that is, that is exciting.

The other thing I would note, I have this, event kind of stuck in my head when I think about AI an early on event, um,

that happened at Vanderbilt University, where, uh, there was a

there was a mass shooting at Michigan State, where I graduated from a couple years ago.

And, I think it was the College of Education at Vanderbilt University sent an email out to students,

sort of offering their condolences. affirming their safety and providing resources.

and at the end of the email, there was a note that said that this was composed by ChatGPT.

And this was really early on. This is probably two years ago when this happened.

So there was a kind of controversy and backlash to that composition.

But that story is useful for me because it suggests kind of what's at stake with this.

And it made me think about the value of human communication in particular and the, you know, potential.

Potential use of this in ways that might be pretty gross to us.

So this idea that, like, you know, in a moment where we need to

where we're trying to write as a way of connecting with people and making them feel seen and making them feel supported,

that was outsourced to this machine that wrote this thing that

was designed to be heartfelt but was not actually, it was not carefully composed by a person.

So, you know what's interesting about that example, Scott, is that right now,

we know that various disciplines that rely on the idea of human connection and human care.

I'll take one example. In theology, we imagine right now that there's a group of pastors that may be trained or rabbis or imams,

and they're actually learning how to construct sermons using ChatGPT.

And so I raise that to say there's these examples of these social crises,

which obviously you point out ethically, there's a real question about whose voice to authenticate, what event?

But there's also, I think, this kind of idea that you can do a lesson

plan or you can write a sermon or you can do anything with these tools.

And I mentioned a sermon because one thinks of that as a more holy event than, let's say, writing a lesson plan tomorrow morning.

But I would argue it's just as holy to write a good lesson plan for the depth and breadth and authenticity of the actual challenge for your students.

I guess the point is--what I meant by ubiquitous--it's showing up in all sorts of training contexts, educational contexts,

not just education schools that teach teachers, but people who are training, you know, doctors and nurses and pastors.

So it's an interesting world we're going to. But I see my good colleague reminding me we're running out of time.

So I'm going to now hit the next question. And I promise you, we can all come back to this in six months and see what we think then.

Yeah. Thank you. Brent. Looking ahead, what are your predictions for the future of writing education in light of AI advancements?

And what advice would you give to teachers who are feeling overwhelmed or uncertain about how to adapt AI?

You could start with the second question.

Even teacher educators in addition to teachers and students, right?

So one big one is of course, what I talked about is sort of renewed, renewed interest in philosophical questions around education.

A second optimistic one that I have is, I think that that developing authentic writing skills,

developing not just the ability to, to write in scare quotes with ChatGPT,

but to to do the kinds of things that ChatGPT otherwise does for writers, select words,

organize them, convey voice, um, go beyond those things, right?

Do it in ways that that reflect your...

...your voice and your perspective. And that can connect with people in ways that a cold mass email

from ChatGPT can't.

I think those will become very valuable skills in the workplace.

So if we think about, if we think about, the marketplace

for the workforce, if we think about everyone using this kind of technology,

when everyone is using it, it becomes less valuable, in terms of competition for a job.

So I think maybe we'll be able to make, as writing becomes more scarce,

maybe we'll be able to make an argument that it is more valuable and appealing to people to study as a result of that.

How about overwhelmed?

Let's talk to the people who maybe on this webinar who feel a little bit overwhelmed by everything.

How are you handling it, Scott? Give us a little bit of what you're doing each day to breathe.

I would say, you know, I think people take different approaches.

I do a lot of analog work in my classes. Like I said, I think you can you can, uh, assert ownership over what your classroom looks like.

I think you can cordon off where AI can can be a part of your room and where it doesn't,

I think, don't be afraid to approach the hype around AI with skepticism.

Right? This is not something that, if you don't do it, you're a Luddite.

I'm actually working on a project right now about Luddism

and thinking about kind of revisiting that history and theorizing our relationships to educational technology with it.

I think that that notion that not getting with the times is sort of baked into

American culture in many ways, and certainly here in Silicon Valley,

that is that is a guiding ethos.

But if you feel a little queasy about that or uncertain or you think like, oh, I don't know how to support my work,

Those are good instincts, and I think you should keep them with you rather than dismiss them and suppress them

in order to sort of like, be a blind, optimistic adopter of these things.

Right? We are better teachers for having an open minded but a healthy skepticism of these kinds of new,

powerful technologies rather than, rather than just kind of blindly rolling them and blindly adopting them ourselves.

That's a really, really good message to leave us with.

I think, one of the things we've been hearing in our field work and in our, in our development of interviews and case studies,

is that people are really sharing, I think, where you're suggesting Scott is a healthy middle ground.

And I also think that we don't want to be caught in false dichotomies either.

I think you put it out research, and I do want to end the note for us,

Carrie, we are research-driven, we are research-based, and we believe actually in research.

So I think, Scott, my sense is that we are just way too early right now on any of the research.

As you said, there's corporate research and you call them scare quotes.

There's research that supposedly appears as research, but really, we don't know much about the methodology,

the studies, the time that's required to actually sit with and steeped in the research questions themselves.

There's a real rush to play and a rush to be a part of the playing, but we don't have that healthy skepticism yet

which I hope we will design and derive around,

"Well, wait a second here." You know, anytime we've ever had a technology adoption before.

And there's been many, many, many, as we've been told by other people in our webinars since the 1950s,

where are the studies that talk about the so-called effectiveness or value added or bang for the buck?

And right now it's not clear at all that those studies even exist.

So I like this idea carry of us at the center really putting Scott's work and Bronwyn's work ahead,

asking us if we can meet back again to see where we are in six months.

And maybe by then we'll have some studies that we can point to and look at and talk about about their quality.

But right now it seems to be a bit of a sort of free for all.

And that's okay, because we're in a space of innovation. But very clearly and quickly,

we would suggest as a Center that we have to keep asking those tough critical questions

that philosophical foundations of education are being opened up in front of us.

What does it mean to learn? What does it mean to write? What does it mean to think?

These are all things that are now becoming important with our "machine partners" in scare quotes again.

So let's play. But let's also keep a healthy, healthy view of what may not be the best playing strategy in certain cases with our students.

I'm going to leave it at that today, and I'm going to say thank you so much for joining us.

It's been a great and wonderful conversation. We cannot wait to see you all again in the future.

Dr. Jarvie, thank you very much, Dr. LaMay, and have a great rest of your day.

Bye bye.