

Episode: Can Artificial Intelligence Help Rethink Writing and Assessment?

Series: [AI in the Classroom](#)

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Elin Sundström Sjödin:

I think of it as a dance. It's like we need to make new choreography and we have a new dance partner. And we have to try to dance in the same rhythm.

[short electronic musical sting]

Very early on in Sweden, the first student was caught cheating on a big exam for having used AI or the ChatGPT, so I think the discussion about it landed quite, maybe a bit wrong from the start. AI is part of the network I'm investigating, so I am studying reading. And so of course, AI is really coming into this field. It becomes a very strong new actor. For example, I have one study about a robot at libraries that read to children or children read to that robot. When we get an AI in our practices, it's not only the AI that comes in, it also comes in different regulations and laws. And so for example, this robot at the libraries, it turned out they cannot use it the way it was designed. They cannot use the face recognition. They can only use it as a glorified iPad, which is a very expensive iPad, but it's cute.

What surprised me is that how complex it is, the use of, because it's so many different things. Laws for example, that hasn't caught up. How can we do things differently? How can we use this to get better teaching? I will have to approach the writing assignments differently, like write a text. How you do it is not very important anymore, but we can discuss this text in a different way. And then use the time, my teaching time not to grading as much, but to having seminars, discussing, meeting and talking to students. I think that would be a very good use of teacher time.

I don't know. I'm all for students self-assessment. Not in a neoliberal way, but kind of, "Okay, I have finished. I feel content with my assignment or with my learning in this." That's the way I would want assessment to be, like a cooperation with the students. Assessment is a sacred thing in education. Or maybe it has become a sacred thing. It's our way of putting a stamp on the students. And maybe we could start talking about whether assessment has a too big role in education and if teachers are more than just assessors of certain levels of knowledge. I think teaching is more than assessment. Sometimes I think of it as a dance. It's like we need to make new choreography and we have a new dance partner. And we have to try to dance in the same rhythm. And there are so many different things that needs to find the rhythm together, and also to meet the fears, and to take seriously that people are worried about falling behind. For example, elderly people who struggle with smartphones, for example, how they also need to come into the dance, to be invited to the dance at least.

The students, they have everything to win. They are the ones this... If we talk about ChatGPT, they have the most use for it. They can really benefit from this, especially students who don't have the language resources, which is why it's so brilliant. This is also something that terrifies, I think a societal issue. Some segments of society which needs to protect writing as something and reading as something really important, which we can't just let anyone be able to be excellent academics and to be very good at writing. We haven't talked about, what if writing isn't the issue? What if being a good writer isn't the primary academic achievement? For so long, I think we have seen writing as the primary way of showing knowledge, of dividing people into or ordering people into successful and less successful. And what if this ordering tool that we have, what if it's opened up or broken down, then we will need new ways of valuing academic knowledge, if ordering is still our aim.