Enhancing Academic Writing: Insights from Using a Writing Bot Assistant

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of a writing bot assistant in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class to support students in crafting cause-effect essays. The bot, designed to simulate a collaborative writing assistant, provided tailored feedback and encouraged deeper thinking, as reflected in student feedback. One student noted, "he kept me thinking instead of giving me straight answers," highlighting the bot's role in fostering critical thinking. Another student realized, "The Bot's responses are only as good as the input you give him," emphasizing the importance of student engagement in the learning process.

While the bot was praised for tailoring feedback to individual needs and offering specific advice on improving thesis statements and structure, some areas for improvement were identified. Students expressed a desire for the bot to provide more suggestions on how to improve their essays rather than simply identifying what needed improvement. Additionally, they preferred receiving examples of correct practices alongside feedback on potential mistakes. One student mentioned, "I would prefer if it provided examples along with where I went right instead of pointing out all potential mistakes."

The bot's approach of asking questions to stimulate deeper thinking was well-received, though some students found it challenging when their questions were met with further questions rather than direct answers. Despite this, the bot was seen as a valuable tool for refining arguments and structure, making the essay-writing process less stressful and more professional. Students appreciated the bot's resemblance to professor feedback, with one stating, "using The Bot felt like having a collaborative writing assistant, and it made my work more professional."

Overall, the integration of the writing bot in the EAP class demonstrated its potential to enhance the essay-writing process by providing personalized, constructive feedback and fostering a deeper understanding of academic writing principles. Future improvements could focus on offering more actionable advice and examples to further support student learning.

Keywords: Enhancing Academic Writing, Insights from Using a Writing Bot Assistant