A Nursing Professor's Response to ChatGPT

Daniela Brink, Ed.D. MSN, MSEd, RN-C[#]

[#]Nursing Program, Ozarks Technical Community College, Missouri, USA

[#]**Corresponding author:** Daniela Brink, Ed.D. MSN, MSEd, RN-C, ASN Instructor Community Health Nursing, Clinical Placement Coordinator, Ozarks Technical Community College, 1001 East Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, Missouri 65802, USA

Introduction

Chat GPT, an artificial intelligence chatbot has taken the world of academia by storm. Launched on Nov. 30, 2022, Chat GPT uses machine-grade learning algorithms to create prose that sounds very much like a human wrote it. It is currently free to use and can produce a written answer on virtually any subject, from practically any perspective with just a few key words given as direction. Within seconds, it can spit out a tweet, an essay, exam question answers and in December, 2022 it actually passed all three parts of the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam as part of a research experiment. Let that sink in.

ChatGPT is artificial intelligence. It is a tool designed to help students cheat. Professors, including this author, have been playing within this powerful tool to answer a probing and timely question: Should they ban it completely or build upon it? Some professors are currently scrambling to write new guidelines for writing, updating curriculum and changing test questions to minimize cheating. My personal experience with the tool is that it is inconsistent in its responses. One middle school teacher recently related that they could spot the plagiarism immediately because its language was too intellectual and inconsistent with work typically submitted by 12 and 13-year-old children. Some high school teachers had more difficulty in spotting plagiarism generated by AI especially in Advanced Placement English courses. Some college and university professors have begun requiring students to write their essays in longhand during class to thwart cheating. Some large public-school districts like New York City and Los Angeles have already blocked the service from their networks.

Here are the issues as it pertains to nursing education from the perspective of this nurse educator:

Chat GPT creates a loss of intellectual integrity: Nursing is a science. The process of socializing and educating a person to become a nurse takes time because of the many important things that one needs to learn about the human body, the way that it functions, how disease may reveal itself and how it can be treated. It is a grueling but necessary process. From learning Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology (which are only a few of the pre-requisites required) to actual nursing courses, this process requires more than mere memorization and recall on a test.

The process of Nursing education requires students to think critically: As does the writing process within the profession. Gone are the days when we wrote patient notes in long hand form. Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) are the new charting system world-wide, however there are still areas dedicated within that system for Patient Notes. Subtle changes in a patient's status need to be first identified by the nurse, considered in light of the nurse's clinical judgement, and then noted and communicated through the EMR (and sometimes even followed up with a phone call to a physician). Knowing when and how to do this requires critical thinking. We teach nursing students that the patient's chart is a legal document, five or even ten years from now one may be called upon in court to defend what was once written in there. We jokingly relate to our students that we learn to document in nursing with "CYA" in mind (cover your ass). Regardless, knowing WHAT to write, and HOW to write are critical elements of the Documentation course within any nursing education worth its salt.

Cheating has become accepted cultural practice: The impact of the recent pandemic is still being tallied, but we already know that numeracy rates and literacy rates have declined, while cheating has soared with the advent of remote instruction. According to Copyleaks, Inc. which sells tools to detect plagiarism, during the height of the pandemic, plagiarism appeared in nearly 50% of all academic submissions [1]. Nursing Board pass rates are beginning to reflect the impact of this phenomena as well [2]. It does no good to allow a student to pass nursing school, only to have them fail the licensing board exam at the end of that long and arduous journey. The new Clinical Judgement Model being adopted with the April 2023 nursing board exams across the United States may impose even greater pain in this area. This author predicts that pass rates for first time test takers will initially decline as nursing schools scramble to employ this new way of higher order thinking and making nursing judgements into their curriculum.

Nursing is a most trusted profession: Year after year, surveys which ask people which is the most trusted profession list Nurses consistently among the top three professions [3]. AI technology may be the up and coming, latest and greatest thing in education, but it short-changes the nursing student from the process of actually working through things and learning to think for themselves. For example, determining a patient's fluid and electrolyte balance is an important skill in nursing. As much as students detest this particularly complicated unit of study, determining whether a patient is in metabolic or respiratory acidosis or alkalosis is critical to determining and carrying out the necessary course of treatment. And let's face it, nurses catch doctor's mistakes from time to time and intervene before the patient is truly harmed. In the current era of medical mistrust, it behooves nurses and their students to embrace the Kantian ethical principle of the Categorical Imperative where we:

"*Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end." [4-6].*
Or as the Golden Rule brilliantly implies: "Do unto others…"

As professional nurses, we have the public trust. We must not squander it. Taking shortcuts in the process of nursing education by using artificial intelligence like Chat GPT may potentially hurt a patient, but it hurts the student nurse most of all. We must consistently earn it by embracing the process of nursing education with the ultimate goal of doing right by the patients we are so privileged to serve. The only thing nurses should cheat is death.

References

1. Copyleaks, Inc. (2020) Covid-19 state of plagiarism report. Copyleaks bi-annual media report - 2020.
2. Robbins R (2022) Nursing exam failure rates spark review of test results. Medscape.
3. Brenan M (2023) Nurses retain top ethics rating in U.S., but below 2020 high. Gallup.
4. Cahn SM (2014) Exploring ethics. An introductory anthology. Oxford University Press.
5. Delaney M (2023) AI language bot ChatGPT can pass parts of business, law and medical exams. The Washigton Times.
6. Van Graan AC, Williams MJS (2017) A conceptual framework to facilitate clinical judgement in nursing: A methodological perspective. Health SA Gesondheid 22: 275-290.