

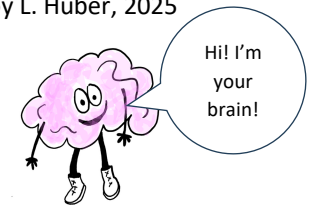
AI is almost everywhere and comes in many different forms. Some types, like spelling and grammar checkers and search engines, have been around for a long time. But in this zine, I'm talking about *generative AI*, which includes things like ChatGPT. These programs are trained to generate new content, like text, images, and videos, based on the immense amount of data that has already been input into the internet. (That's why professors can sometimes recognize content produced by generative AI; it sounds too "on the nose.") This zine isn't meant to be "anti-tech." It's made using a computer for fuck's sake. Instead, the aim is to get you to think about what you lose when you use generative AI instead of "doing it yourself" (DIY).

Want to be smarter and more creative?

FUCK AI
TRY DIY

Don't outsource your brain to ChatGPT.

by L. Huber, 2025



The overwhelm of college is real.

Why do people use generative AI? A [2024 study](#) found that workload and time pressure are some of the main reasons students use generative AI, like ChatGPT, for their coursework. These reasons are understandable and can't be dismissed. College workloads can be massive, especially compared to high school, and learning to manage time effectively can be lifeflong.

If I'm struggling with a big project, I'll sometimes **gamify** it. I'll break the big thing into steps or quests and reward myself for every small win. I've even been known to draw a game board to keep myself motivated.

If you're feeling unsure about your assignment and are tempted to give up doing it yourself, reach out to your professor. They're educators because they want to help you develop your brain! They can help you strategize how to tackle the project.

Last of all, if you **CHOOSE** to use AI for coursework, make sure you know whether it is OK with your professor and school. Your brain really doesn't want to deal with those consequences!

When you use generative AI to organize a paper, **you lose** the chance to figure out the best ways to formulate an argument. When you use it to find sources, **you lose** a chance to improve your memory or to develop an opinion about (i.e., critically assess) someone else's ideas. (You also risk using fake quotes and data, since ChatGPT makes up a lot of stuff.)

Here's my unpopular opinion--
Generative AI is a **SCAM**.
Tools like ChatGPT promise to help, but they steal the chance for your brain to learn and develop. Yes, it can be a struggle to do the things you want to outsource to AI, but the struggle of DIY-ing helps you get better at **EVERYTHING**.

Take notes in class. Like marking up readings, just jotting down main ideas, questions, and key words will help you remember and process the material.

If you're having trouble coming up with ideas or organizing a paper without ChatGPT, **talk out your ideas** using "voice-to-text" in Word or Google Docs. (Yes, that is a form of AI, but it still involves your brain). Or, use your phone to dictate a note to yourself. Once you have your ideas out into the universe, you can go back and smooth things out.

Another idea is to **map** or **sketch** your ideas using a whiteboard or paper. Get creative and use color to connect ideas.

The process of coming up with an idea, articulating that idea, and finding sources to support your perspective is immensely rewarding. Doing this over and over will help you feel good about your abilities. Some people argue that relying on generative AI instead of your brain can even lead to [cognitive decline and memory loss](#). **YIKES!**

When you use generative AI to write a paper, blog post, response, essay, or whatever, you are giving away a chance to develop your **BRAIN and VOICE!**
The writing you do in college allows you to practice expressing yourself and to find the voice you'll use throughout your life. Why would you want to give that up?

I'm not saying never use AI, but you should try to avoid "outsourcing" your brain work. Here are some ways to exercise your brain and "do it yourself."

Take notes on what you read. If you print an article or use a print book, mark it up! That's why the world has highlighters. OR, take notes on a separate sheet of paper or a computer. Underline or **highlight** what you think is important, or parts you don't understand. Even if you don't come back to the book or printout, the **act** of marking it up helps your brain process and remember.

