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Is AI an Actor?

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Emily Wirkus

Is AI an Actor? - Acting II Lesson Plan

UND Theatre Arts

8/21/2023

Purpose: “ChatGPT is not going anywhere - so what does that mean for theatre performance practitioners? Can ChatGPT truly take the work out of our creative practices by completing artistic goals for us given the right criteria? This assignment is meant to challenge exactly that. Using previous application and knowledge of acting technique and text analysis terminology used to break down a monologue (including but not limited to: beat changes, objectives, tactics, use of active language etc) we will see if a ChatGPT analysis can measure up to our own analysis. It is important to think critically about what makes our work strong, on and offstage. By comparing these analyses, we will determine which analyses carry through to the most thorough performances, and determine if they inspire or detract from performances that ‘live truthfully under imaginary circumstances’. It is also important for us to experience how ChatGPT generated results are similar and different in application to the human experience of the characters we portray onstage. This connects directly to the acting standards set by National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) for analysis and performance, expands on vital critical thinking and communication skills, and builds on application of analytical information to voice & movement practices through performance. A career in performance is constantly growing and changing; being able to grow alongside (if not ahead) to inspire and add to your ‘actor’s toolbelt’ through application and practice is a huge part of your longevity and success as a practitioner. You are also acting as a pioneer on behalf of the University of North Dakota participating in this activity as part of an experiment on how we can best utilize Artificial Intelligence to the greatest advantage in our classrooms, benefiting generations of students to come.”

Skills: The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course and in this field and future profession.

- Students will demonstrate **understanding** by completing their own analysis of a monologue using terminology from previous coursework including, but not limited to: objectives, beats, & tactics using active language.
- Students will **apply** previous analysis practices to a dramatic text on their own and separately using ChatGPT through to a fully realized kinesthetic performance.
- Students will **analyze** monologue analysis between their own work and work that is ChatGPT generated.
- Students will **synthesize** the information in performance of the monologue based on each analysis; student created, and ChatGPT generated.
- Students will **evaluate** each other’s performance and **judge** the differences and similarities between student and ChatGPT analysis through classroom discussion.
- Students will **interpret** their findings and draw relative conclusions and/or **invent** new material inspired by which set of analytical information fits best.
- Students will **create** a hybrid analysis of their monologue to be performed in class.

Knowledge: This assignment will help you increase knowledge in the following qualifiers for an advanced degree in Performance in Acting by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST):

- Demonstrated ability to act (i.e., to project one's self believably in word and action into imaginary circumstances, evoked through improvisation or text).
- Demonstrated ability to engage effectively in improvisations both by oneself and in an ensemble.
- Demonstrated ability to create characters convincingly from plays drawn from different genres and styles in an ensemble relationship with other actors.
- A developed technique for analyzing the specific tasks required in performing varied characters from written plays.

Tasks: Students will remember a monologue they have used for classroom assignments. They will use the foundation of knowledge in dramatic text analysis to score the monologue using appropriate and applicable terminology including, but not limited to: objectives, beats, tactics, etc. using active andactable language. Students will have the opportunity to prepare and perform their work first using their own applied analysis practices. The student will then upload their monologue into ChatGPT and prompt it to analyze & interpret the monologue for them, by breaking into objectives, beats, and tactics using active language. The student will apply the information provided to a new performance of their monologue. Students will then compare and contrast their work on paper and in performance to the monologue analyzed by ChatGPT. Students will be given the opportunity to present their findings in a group discussion in addition to responding to other's work. Using their own application of knowledge and kinesthetic experiences through performance, students will draw their own conclusions on what analytical elements were useful, and which did not apply as strongly to personal performance practices. Students will use the evaluation of this comparison and arguments from class discussion to create a hybrid performance using the analytical scoring of their monologue using practices learned in class and solutions provided by ChatGPT.

Criteria for Success: A successful analytical breakdown of a monologue will answer a resounding 'yes' to the following questions:

- Did the analysis ring true to the human experience?
- Did it use strong, active, 'actable language'?
- Did it follow the given circumstances of the world of the play?
- Did it indicate an applicable moment before?
- Were the beats an appropriate length and did they change in congruence with objectives?
- Was it accessible in application to performance?
- Did the super objective follow the appropriate pattern of language (_____ wants _____ in order to _____)?

The instructor will provide a series of examples of each of these criteria applied to dramatic literature, both correctly and incorrectly. Students will have the opportunity to kinesthetically apply both sets of examples in performance practice and discuss the results objectively as a group, discerning what makes it successful and unsuccessful from a performance scholar and audience member point of view. Students will also receive a copy of the following questions in the form of a checklist when observing others performance of dramatic material, both self-analyzed and ChatGPT generated analysis.