

**Transcript for Assessing Assessments, PartyRock Style: No-Code GenAI-Powered Apps
2024 ETUG Spring Workshop: Digital Literacy Today – Day 2, May 10, 2024
Educational Technology Users Group
Presenter: Sally Goldberg Powell**

FACILITATOR:

The session is called Assessing Assessments, PartyRock Style with Sally Goldberg Powell. Sally is an instructional technologist, digital learning at the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Toronto Metropolitan University. Sally, I will turn it over to you.

SALLY GOLDBERG POWELL:

Thanks so much. Hi, it's nice to be here with everyone from a little further east. And I will acknowledge the land on which TMU or Toronto Metropolitan University, formerly Ryerson University is on, as well as where I'm presenting from. So TMU is on the Dish With One Spoon Territory, and that is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunée. And I am currently in the city of Bowmanville, which is part of the municipality of Clearington, which is situated on the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas, the Chippewas of the Anishinabeg so just acknowledging those two areas and the land on which I am right now and where I work and greeting you on the land on which you are joining us today.

And yeah, and now going into the realm of the interwebs and the wonderful world of generative AI that a lot of us are grappling with on our own work, and across our campuses. And so what I want to talk to you about today is just one of the tools that I've started playing around with that gave me a way of not only finding a new way to approach questions with faculty about how generative AI was impacting their own assessments with their students, but also a way to show them how it works in a sense, and also getting access to various large language models that we might not go to as we normally go to, especially one that was not available in Canada. I found a way in, a back door that allowed me to play around with some things that weren't available otherwise. And the reason this was done is because the first point of concern that surfaced, as many of you probably already know, was around assessments with generative AI. Lots of worries about people cheating, writing full essays. That kind of thing started coming out. And so that's where our team started looking into being able to provide some support. And so I'm part of a teaching. Sorry, I'm part of a GenAI working group that's part of the Centre and we created some subgroups and one of those subgroups is called the Gen AI Teaching Partners Program. What we do is we work with a select number of faculty from across different disciplines and look at one specific assessment that they're doing and see if we can find some ways to mitigate or integrate GenAI, definitely clarify how and when it's allowed to be used by the students. And so in that work, I was looking for tools as instructional technologist that I could bring in that would not only let me do that work, but also show instructors what was possible. And so I ended up going to a PartyRock. This was around the time when people started talking about GPTs that I was looking at this, the little apps, essentially, these little agents that you can create using Open AI to create your own little apps. And the only thing is you'd have to have a ChatGPT pro license or premium license in order to

use them. And so even if I had one, which I didn't at the time, I couldn't share them with anyone unless they had a premium account as well, which was a barrier.

So PartyRock is currently at least. It's still sort of in a pilot phase. It's free to use, share, and remix. It's made by Amazon Web Services. You do need to have an account through an Amazon account to use it, but it's a free account, can get you in. It allows you to generate, it allows you to create apps using large language models, but it allows you to actually prompt to create your app and then customize it from there. If you're not a coder by trade, I've done a little bit of coding here and there, but really, I'm a journalist and a video producer and editor. So this was a nicer way for me to get into this area personally and also to share with people who might not have that background. So it's nice that you can start by saying, I want an app that can do this, and then it builds something for you and then you can go into the back end and change it around and mess with it. It also has a really clear privacy statement. It's really, keeping that ethical use of GenAI in focus. It's not necessarily, I will say all GenAI, I would approach with a grain of salt, but it does have some intent to be as transparent as possible. And it also has an opt out option that's really easy. So if you don't want your data that you're putting into the tool to be used to be training the language models that you're using, you can say you want to opt out, and you can, there's just a toggle to do so. And it uses Anthropic's Claude, or at least originally, that was the only language available in the tool. Here's more now and I'll show you that in a moment. But what was nice about Anthropic. Again, they have an eye on being an ethical company and being more transparent. Again, taken with a grain of salt. It also wasn't available in Canada at the time. Now you can get to the earlier versions of their model in Canada, do a trial and test with it, but you couldn't actually access Claude at all in Canada at the time when I was playing with this. It was an opportunity to get my hands on something I couldn't otherwise. So just a quote from an article I found, talking about the ethics behind or which tool is more ethical and what's going on in terms of trying to add transparency and accountability to these tools. There is truly a commitment to transparency and that's kind of the mantra of Anthropic. And so it was nice to be able to play with a tool like that. We're often talking about access to technology being one of the key things that we're looking for in terms of creating inclusive solutions to things here, but also the idea of having students' privacy and security in mind whenever we're introducing new tools. So again, introduced with being very, very clearly a third-party tool that instructors would have to be careful about introducing to their students, but at least I felt a bit more comfortable doing that. And here's a list of the models that are now available. This is as of yesterday or the day before, actually, that I took this screenshot of which models are available. These are just the text models. But there are also some image models as well. Originally, Stable Diffusion was on the list, and now it's Titan, which is Amazon's in-house one.

I will give you a demo now of the tools pretty briefly. And hopefully, we'll leave a little bit of time at the end for some questions. We started a little late, so hopefully I'll give a little time at the end. But I created two tools that we're using in our actual partnerships where we're talking to instructors about their assessments. Excuse me, and I've used I've created a lot more since then. Sorry, one second. I have a whole bunch that I've been playing with ever since because it's

so fast and easy to make an app and then all the time goes to refining it and playing around with it for about three or four hours after you've created it. But this is the second one I made to use with the Teaching Partners Program. The first one I'll get to next, but we realize there's a step before that we should get to, which was looking at the assignment itself before we started thinking about ways that we could address issues of generative AI.

So what I've done here is I've created what I like to call a mediocre assignment because it'll have the most useful results for us today. Just Introduction to Marketing. It's like a one-page assignment where you answer some questions. I'm just going to copy the text of this assignment and throw it into my PartyRock tool here.

This is what the tool looks like. I can actually share this in the chat with you as well, if you'd like to give it a chance, try. Let me just get to the chat. Sorry, I'll try and be louder. I'm speaking very close to my mic, but hopefully you can hear me okay. Come closer. There we go. So yeah, there's the link to this tool. I'll paste in the assign, I'll paste in the assignment. And then once I paste it in, it will start doing its work. It should. There it goes. It's a little delay.

What this one does is it creates a list of the core competencies that are being tested by this assignment, and then also a checklist of what's expected in terms of the process for students. This can really help instructors to figure out whether or not the assignment they've created is actually testing for what they hoped it would and what parts of the process might take time away from what they were really the core skills they wanted students to do. So if you can see that part of the tasks is to actually do things you hadn't even considered as being part of the process to get you there. It can help you think about well, maybe that part isn't as important, maybe another part is. It can just help you start to work that out. And so before I would go into the second tool, I would probably suggest that someone would think about refining the assignment a little bit first and then throw it into the next tool, which we'll get to in a second. I just want to show you under the hood slightly. So all of these boxes here, if you hit the remix button at the top, you can make a copy of it for yourself, and then you can see behind a little bit more and make adjustments if you'd like to change it and make a refine to it. Basically, we have a text input box at the top, which is fairly self-explanatory. Then down below, there's core competencies and steps required are both boxes that generate a response. If I hit it here, you can see that what it's doing is essentially taking a prompt that I've already added ahead of time. Then there's an original assignment that has been tagged as such, so it understands that this is where we're pulling from, so it takes the information from here and applies that prompt. The same is exactly going on in steps required. Again, I have a prompt to make a checklist, and then original. It's connecting to original assignment. It's as simple as that to set up and actually, it started off with just a prompt that I said, "I want to make a tool that will find the core competencies and steps required to complete an assignment and it builds this," and then I would fix it from there.

And then there's a chatbot also in here. So you can insert a chat bot where you can then have it using the information that was pulled in these three boxes. It will then have a chat with you

about it and you can refine, ask it for more questions, make an iterative process out of using the tool.

The other one being the tool that is looking at ways of making it AI resistant. I'll throw that in there. And you'll see some common things that we've come up with through our consults so far, things like adding real-world examples, having case studies that are only introduced in the class, adding some more open-ended questions. So things that would be harder to just put in a prompt and get an answer to, for example. And so depending on the assignment, you'll get different things here as well. And then if you find that some of these aren't really working for you, again, there's a chatbot, and you could say, well, "Actually, I don't like this idea. Do you have another idea?" And it'll say sure, because you know how large language models work. They will always try and give you an answer and please you no matter what. But it does end up helping us to sort of help people see that they're on the right track when they do have a good assignment. Most of the people who've volunteered, we realize that they actually have really good assignments, and this stuff actually gives them a little bit of a boost. But they also think, "Wow, there might be a way that I could use this kind of tool in my teaching or to show my students how generative AI might be helpful." I often find it's helpful in that more ideation process or just identifying things and then helping you to think about what you need to add as a human to this process. The last thing I'll mention is that at the top of all of these, I have a little disclaimer saying, "Be sure to consult with humans like us at our Centre about what you find in this tool." And this is something that I introduced to them in consultation, not just putting it out there on a website or anything, but it's been really helpful as a place to start. And it's just such a nice little, easy to use app, so I wanted to share it with everyone.

And so yeah, that's pretty much it from me. I do have a slide here with some of the other apps I've made, including a multiple-choice question generator, which I've found is actually better than some of the AI apps that are out there to do it because I've added a chatbot again so I can refine it. And yeah, that's about all I had to say. So if anyone has any questions, I would like to talk about this. If we have a couple seconds, I'm happy to have any questions.

FACILITATOR:

Absolutely. Thank you very much. Sally. Let's give her a round of applause. And I'll throw in that second. Yeah, we definitely have some time for questions. So questions for Sally. Oh, yeah, a few hands up. Thank you. I think it is here.

DOROTHY:

Thank you so much for this really interesting showcase. I'm just interested in how does your institution go about the privacy assessment situation. Sorry, my name is Dorothy from UBC. Because at UBC, it is very split right now how people handle it. Some departments are just going ahead, paying for a pro license and just rolling with it. Whereas other departments don't do it because usually UBC is a very rigorous privacy assessment process.

SALLY:

Yeah, we do too, absolutely. Another subgroup that I'm on is our Technical Support Subgroup, which works with the people in our campus computing services. And, you know, at this point, there's no, there's no real interest or financial ability to look into having an institutional wide licensed anything, and it would take quite a long time for our processes of privacy and security checks that would happen. So what we have is a third-party tool, sort of disclaimer that we would give to instructors. We're not suggesting at this point that instructors require anybody to use a general AI tool. And we also suggest that they be incredibly transparent about discussing with their students what kind of information they're inputting into these tools because it is such a black box, and that transparency question, even though you know, Anthropic is trying to address it a little bit. It's still a black box, and there's still concerns about where that information goes. So with that in mind, a lot of my suggestions from my sort of technical standpoint in a conversation with educational developers and such being in the room and it's me is to suggest that if you do have anything involving GenAI that your students are using that it's a choice that they're clear about what the choice is or you're doing a demonstration or providing something that you've generated, and that is up to you as an instructor to do so. So it's true. It's going to take a long time. It depends on your institution. There are some that are Microsoft Teams schools that have gone ahead and purchased the Copilot, the enterprise Copilot version, which can be a bit more insular and doesn't share information. But yeah, there's a lot of work being done by our CCS group about how to ensure tools that we already have to start putting GenAI into their tools. How are they going to approach that? Do they have opt out options? Do they have ways of ensuring that even the tools that we have now continue to have the privacy and security options and meet the guidelines that we've pointed out early on. So yeah, it's a conversation for sure.

FACILITATOR:

For sure. We had one more hand. I just don't remember. Thank you. Perfect. Probably the time for one more question, and then we can move on to the break. But here we go.

HELEN:

Hi, Sally. It's Helen from the Justice Institute of British Columbia. Thank you for the amazing presentation. I'm wondering for the apps that you have created for your faculty members. Are they searchable within the PartyRock database?

SALLY:

Maybe. The PartyRock database works kind of weird from what I've found. I haven't played around with it much, but there's, like, a browse option, but it's like it only provides you with a few, a few that you can find. So let me see if I can go back and look at it and see if I could briefly share. Yeah. When you're on the main page here, it will sometimes list a few for you or you could discover. But I don't think they actually have a way to search. It could be that one day it will pop up here, but I think that these are super popular ones or ones they've built. But that said, I have them in my slides and I'm happy to have them shared after. I've already shared my slide deck, but I could share the slide deck right now in this chat if you want, and you can grab it for anybody who'd like to who's online at least.

HELEN: Thank you.

FACILITATOR:

Perfect. Thank you so much. Yeah, I think we're out of time, probably for questions because we'll move into the break, but thank you again, Sally. Really appreciate it.

SALLY: Thank you. Thanks for having me.