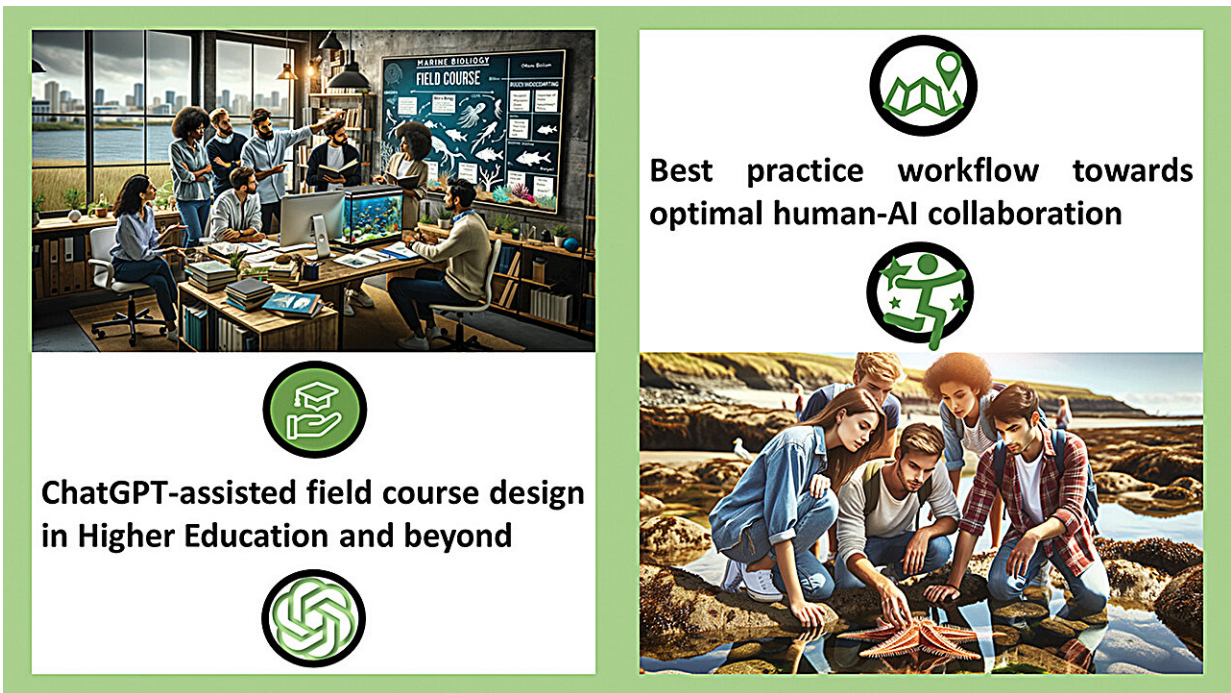


# ChatGPT is an effective tool for planning field work, school trips and even holidays, say scientists

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Credit: *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* (2024). DOI: 10.1080/14703297.2024.2316716

Researchers exploring ways to utilize ChatGPT for work, say it could save organizations and individuals a lot of time and money when it comes to planning trips.

A new study, [published](#) in *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, has tested whether ChatGPT can be used to design University field studies. It found that the free-to-use AI model is an effective tool for not only planning educational trips around the world, but also could be used by other industries.

The research, led by scientists from the University of Portsmouth and University of Plymouth, specifically focused on marine biology courses. It involved the creation of a brand new field course using ChatGPT, and the integration of the AI-planned activities into an existing university module.

The team developed a comprehensive guide for using the chatbot, and successfully organized a single-day trip in the UK using the AI's suggestion of a beach clean-up activity to raise awareness about marine pollution and its impact on marine ecosystems.

They say the established workflow could also be easily adapted to support other projects and professions outside of education, including environmental impact studies, travel itineraries, and business trips.

Dr. Mark Tupper, from the University of Portsmouth's School of Biological Sciences, said, "It's well known that universities and schools across the UK are stretched thin when it comes to resources. We set out to find a way to utilize ChatGPT for planning [field work](#), because of the considerable amount of effort that goes into organizing these trips.

"There's a lot to consider, including safety procedures, risks, and design logistics. This process can take several days, but we found ChatGPT effectively does most of the leg work in just a few hours. The simple framework we've created can be used across the whole education sector, not just by universities. With many facing budget constraints and staffing limitations, this could save a lot of time and money."

Chatbots like ChatGPT are powered by large amounts of data and computing techniques to make predictions to string words together in a meaningful way. They not only tap into a vast amount of vocabulary and information, but also understand words in context.

Since OpenAI launched the 3.0 model in November 2022, millions of users have used the technology to improve their personal lives and boost productivity. Some workers have used it to write papers, make music, develop code, and create lesson plans.

"If you're a [school teacher](#) and want to plan a class with 40 kids, our ChatGPT roadmap will be a game changer," said Dr. Reuben Shipway, Lecturer in Marine Biology at the University of Plymouth.

"All a person needs to do is input some basic data, and the AI model will be able to design a course or trip based on their needs and requirements. It can competently handle various tasks, from setting learning objectives to outlining assessment criteria. For businesses, ChatGPT is like having a personal planning assistant at your fingertips. Imagine trips with itineraries that unfold effortlessly, or fieldwork logistics handled with the ease of conversation."

The paper says while the AI model is adaptable and user-friendly, there are limitations when it comes to field course planning, including risk assessments.

Dr. Ian Hendy, from the University of Portsmouth, explained, "We asked ChatGPT to identify the potential hazards of this course and assess the overall risk of this activity from low to high, and the results were mixed. In some instances, ChatGPT was able to identify hazards specific to the activity—like the increased risk of slipping on seaweed-covered rocks exposed at low tide—but in other instances, ChatGPT exaggerated threats.

"For example, we find the risk of students suffering from physical strain and fatigue from carrying bags of collected litter to be low. That's why there still needs to be a human element in the planning stages, to iron out any issues. It's also important that the individual sifting through the results understands the nuances of successful field courses so they can recognize these discrepancies."

The paper concludes with a series of recommendations for [best practices](#) in using ChatGPT for field course design, underscoring the need for thoughtful human input, logical prompt sequencing, critical evaluation, and adaptive management to refine course designs.

## **Top tips to help potential users get the most out of ChatGPT:**

- **Get the ball rolling with ChatGPT:** Ask what details it thrives on for crafting the perfect assignment plan. By understanding the key information it needs, you'll be well-equipped to structure your prompts effectively and ensure ChatGPT provides tailored and insightful assistance;
- **Time management made easy:** Share your preferred schedule, and let ChatGPT handle the logistics. Whether you're a back-to-back meetings person or prefer a more relaxed pace, ChatGPT creates an itinerary that suits your working style;
- **Flexible contingency plans:** Anticipate the unexpected. ChatGPT can help you create contingency plans in case of unforeseen events, ensuring that the trip remains adaptable to changing circumstances without compromising the educational goals;
- **Cultural etiquette guidance:** Familiarize yourself with local cultural norms and business etiquette. ChatGPT can provide tips on appropriate greetings, gift-giving customs, and other cultural considerations, ensuring smooth interactions with local business

partners;

- Become a proficient prompt engineer: There are many quality, low-cost courses in the field of ChatGPT prompt engineering. These are available from online learning platforms such as Udemy, Coursera, and LinkedIn Learning. Poor input leads to poor ChatGPT output, so improving your prompt engineering will always lead to better results;
- Use your unique experiences to improve ChatGPT output: Remember that AI knowledge cannot replace personal experience, but AI can learn from your experiences and use them to improve its recommendations;
- Remember, planning is a two-way street! Engage in feedback with ChatGPT. Don't hesitate to tweak and refine the itinerary until it feels just right. It's your trip, after all.

**More information:** Mark Tupper et al, Field courses for dummies: To what extent can ChatGPT design a higher education field course?, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* (2024). [DOI: 10.1080/14703297.2024.2316716](https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2024.2316716)

Provided by University of Plymouth

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