

12 Top Tips for USING GENERATIVE AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Since the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, the education community has already begun to see the enormous potential of generative AI as a tool for planning, organising, content creation and learning support. The problem? The technology is accelerating so fast that many teachers have no idea how to begin making the most of it. Our expert's top tips could help you to start integrating AI into your classroom for the coming academic year.

ASK WHAT IT NEEDS

With ChatGPT, you could begin by asking what it needs you to initially input to provide the best response. So, something like: "I want you to act as a history teacher. I will provide the syllabus and you will provide me with a scheme of work. First of all, tell me what you need to know from me to create an excellent, differentiated scheme of work."

START BROAD AND ZOOM IN

If you ask ChatGPT to give you a fully differentiated and resourced scheme of work or lesson plan from just one prompt, you'll probably be disappointed. Instead, begin by requesting a weekly outline; then a daily breakdown; then a single lesson; then the resources. That way, you'll get a lot more detail and can tweak the output if it's not quite right.

ROLES HELP TO TACKLE TASKS

Because language models like ChatGPT are trained on human data, they're good at roleplaying. Asking it to assume a specific role – and telling it the tone you wish it to take – will likely make its output closer to what you're looking for. For example: "You will take the role of an expert AQA GCSE maths teacher. Write a syllabus guide for AQA GCSE maths in a friendly, reassuring tone."

CREATE 'CHARACTER' BOTS

You can create your own chat bots for students to have free access to ChatGPT without logging in. On zapier.com, choose 'interfaces' then select 'Chatbot'. Filling in the fields allows you to customise the chatbot's persona (to 'helpful teacher' or 'literary analyst', for example) and create an action that copies the response to the clipboard. You can then release this to your students.

AVOID PLAGIARISM DETECTORS

We'd advise caution in using AI plagiarism checkers as they aren't reliable yet: they're easy to fool and often give false positives. Some students have already been wrongly accused of cheating, which has destroyed their relationship with their teacher. It's better to use your own judgement (as you'll know your own students' style) or consider other options such as controlled assessments.

WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI?

Generative AI encompasses the family of artificial intelligences which are capable of creating content. This includes large language models such as ChatGPT and Google Bard; text-to-image diffusion models including Midjourney and Stable Diffusion; the newer crop of apps which can create videos from text, like RunwayML; and music-focused software such as Google's MusicLM.

THINK BEYOND 'THE NORM'

Gamma is an app which uses AI to plan presentations, while Notion software employs AI to change the tone and length of text, and explore ideas. Even without the AI elements, however, both would be worthwhile additions for any school as online alternatives to Google or Microsoft applications (such as Word and PowerPoint) and are free to use, with free AI credits included.

SET UP AN 'ASK THE AI' STATION

Currently, it's hard for school-age children to engage with ChatGPT, as signing in requires a phone number and two-factor authentication. It's also problematic with data protection in many countries. Instead, you could set up one or two laptops in the classroom as 'ask ChatGPT' workstations, which you can direct your students to use at appropriate moments.

BE CRITICAL USERS

Because they sound so convincing, generative AIs' occasional 'hallucinations' can cause problems. Teach your students to think critically about what AI tells them – and fact check its responses, particularly those involving references. Models like Google Bard, while good for ideation, have already garnered a reputation for confidently making up references and even website URLs.

GENERATE LOTS OF IDEAS

When exploring a topic with ChatGPT, ask it to generate 10, 20 or even 50 ideas around the theme. For example: "Give me ten interesting and unusual lesson starters to hook my Year 6 class into the water cycle." You can then overlay your human intelligence and choose the best option for your class. Some won't be great, but you only need one that is!

TAILOR YOUR RESOURCES

ChatGPT is excellent for differentiating resources to fit specific audiences, as it can rewrite any resource to better suit a different age or ability range. You could also ask it for alternative ways to present information, such as explaining a complex concept in the style of a blockbuster movie scene or giving three simpler analogies that a much younger pupil would be more likely to understand.

TRY THE OPEN AI PLAYGROUND

On platform.openai.com, go into 'Playground'. Choose the chat option from the drop-down menu, and then select the 16K model. This will quadruple the token size (or memory), meaning that you can paste in an entire chapter of a novel, act from a play or section of a textbook, and ask the AI questions about it. This makes the GPT model so much more useful.

DIFFERENT TOOLS FOR DIFFERENT JOBS

ChatGPT is impressive, but it's not the only tool in the box. Perplexity is a simple to use web-enabled AI that runs the most up-to-date version of ChatGPT in the background – while Pi is a friendlier-sounding chatbot that students can get into discussions with on almost any subject. They both encourage learners to go deeper by asking probing questions or suggesting ways to explore a topic.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is Chief Operating Officer for Britus Education, a Bahrain-based company with nine K-12 international schools in the Middle East and North Africa region. A teacher and leader for 25 years, Darren is a blogger and thought leader on AI in education, who hosts The EducAte Podcast. Later this year, he will publish *Re.Generate*, a book on how AI is set to change the education world.



Sources: chat.openai.com | platform.openai.com | zapier.com | perplexity.ai | gamma.app | notion.so | pi.ai