



Pre-Network Briefing: Generative AI in Education – What do educators need to know?

Quick Overview

What is Generative AI?

AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot, Google Gemini) that generate new content—text, images, audio, or video—based on large datasets.

Why It Matters:

Promises to reduce administrative burdens, support personalized learning, and enhance resource creation, enabling teachers to focus more on high-quality teaching.

Key Opportunities

Resource & Lesson Planning:

AI can help create educational materials, generate tailored feedback, and assist in designing curriculum content.

Administrative Efficiency:

Automates routine tasks (marking, scheduling) potentially freeing up valuable teacher time.

Personalized Learning:

Adaptive AI tools can support individualized learning, helping meet diverse student needs.

Support for Teachers:

AI acts as a digital assistant, streamlining processes and providing instant feedback, so teachers can focus on direct instruction.

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Main Challenges & Risks

Content Accuracy:

AI-generated outputs may be inaccurate, biased, or inappropriate. Critical review by educators is essential.

Data Privacy & Safeguarding:

Personal data must be protected. Use AI tools that comply with data protection laws and safeguard young learners.

Intellectual Property Concerns:

Ensure that content used for training or generated by AI respects copyright rules.

Maintaining Human Oversight:

AI is a tool—not a replacement for the teacher-student relationship. Human judgment is key.

Safety and Responsible Use Guidelines

Risk Assessments:

Evaluate the benefits versus the risks for both staff-facing and pupil-facing applications.

Implement Safeguards:

Use AI tools with built-in filtering, monitoring, and supervision—especially for younger users.

Legal Compliance:

Ensure adherence to data protection, safeguarding and intellectual property laws.

Policy Development:

Develop clear school/college policies that guide acceptable use of AI, including guidelines for academic integrity and parental engagement.

What We Need to Know as Educators

Understand the Technology:

Familiarize yourself with how generative AI works—its capabilities, limitations, and the types of outputs it can produce. Knowing that tools like ChatGPT are built on large language models helps frame their potential use and pitfalls.

Be Critical of AI Outputs:

Always review AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, and contextual relevance. Remember that while AI can produce credible-looking materials, human expertise is necessary to ensure quality and appropriateness.

Protect Student Data:

Ensure that any AI application complies with data protection laws. Avoid inputting sensitive or personal information and use tools that incorporate robust privacy safeguards.

Respect Intellectual Property:

Be cautious when using AI-generated content that might be based on copyrighted material. Understand that any resources you create, or use must respect intellectual property rights.

Prioritize the Teacher-Student Relationship:

Recognize that AI is a support tool. Its use should enhance, not replace, the critical human interactions that foster learning, creativity, and emotional growth.

Engage in Ongoing Professional Development:

Seek training and resources to stay updated on the latest AI developments and best practices. Participate in workshops, online courses, or professional networks dedicated to digital teaching tools.

Develop Clear Use Policies:

Work with your institution to create or update policies on AI use. These should cover when and how AI tools are appropriate in both classroom and administrative settings, ensuring that their use is transparent and in line with ethical standards.

Collaborate and Share Experiences:

Engage with fellow educators to share successes, challenges, and strategies for integrating AI. Peer discussions and evidence-sharing can help build a collective understanding and foster innovative approaches.

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Future Directions & Investment

Ongoing Support:

The DfE is funding initiatives (e.g. Oak National Academy's AI lesson assistant, 'content store' pilot) to support innovative AI tool development.

Training & Resources:

New training packages and an online toolkit are being developed to help educators use AI safely and effectively.

Research & Evidence:

Studies are underway to measure AI's impact on educational outcomes and to disseminate best practices from early-adopter institutions.

Talking Points for Discussion

Balancing Efficiency and Accuracy:

How can we harness AI to streamline administrative tasks while ensuring that the content remains reliable and accurate?

Safeguarding Student Data:

What measures should schools adopt to protect personal data when using AI tools in the classroom?

Supporting Teacher Autonomy:

In what ways can AI tools assist teachers without undermining their role or replacing the human element in education?

Developing Clear Policies:

What should a robust school policy on AI use look like? How can we engage parents and the wider community in this conversation?

Future Training Needs:

What types of professional development or training would best support educators in safely integrating AI into their teaching practices?

Final Thoughts

Generative AI offers exciting opportunities to transform education, but its success hinges on responsible implementation, robust safeguards and a continued focus on human oversight.

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