What are the implications for ChatGPT in the classroom?

As soon as the genie was out of the lamp, so to speak, there were effects of ChatGPT and AI on teaching and learning. Whether we felt those impacts right away or not, as soon as it was released, things have the potential to change. Below, we'll talk about ChatGPT in particular, but know that this is just the first one ... and we're thinking long-term about new products to come later.

1. Students can use ChatGPT to do their assignments.

There. I'll just say it clearly and plainly since we're all thinking it. For lots of assignment types (not all of them!), students can ask ChatGPT to do the work for them. They can copy/paste the work into a document or your learning management system and submit it.

2. TurnItIn and other plagiarism checkers can't catch it.

What ChatGPT creates is an original work each time you ask it. It creates something new every time you ask, and its responses are not in the databases of plagiarism checkers. ChatGPT doesn't keep a log of responses it creates, and even if it did, I'm thinking OpenAI (creator of ChatGPT) has no incentive to make all of that available to plagiarism checkers. (Even if it did, the processing power necessary to query that database would be enormous.)

Some people will, undoubtedly, try to find ChatGPT detectors to track down students using it (in a similar way to plagiarism checkers). You may find them. I found one on social media called GPT-2 Output Detector Demo. It's a demo, so it's not a finished product. It's based on GPT2 technology (which is a predecessor to the GPT3 technology that ChatGPT is using as of the writing of this post).

Also, it can be wildly inaccurate. I copied a blog post I wrote into it and it identified it as 92.54% chance of being real. I copied something out of ChatGPT and it identified it as 99.98% chance of being fake. ("Fake," being the term for "written by a bot.") A poem ChatGPT created for a friend, however, was flagged as real.

Beware of using detectors as your way of dealing with this.

They're not reliable. And this approach isn't the long-term solution to helping your students become modern learners.

3. Schools and districts will try to block it, but that won't stop much.

Immediately, IT admins are going to have to decide if they want to block ChatGPT with their internet firewalls. And lots of them will indeed block it. If they do, I hope they don't think that they've solved the "problem" they think they have on their hands.

First of all, blocking ChatGPT on the school's network won't do much. Sure, students won't be able to access it with their school devices on the school network. But did you know that students have cell phones? Phones that operate on a cellular network that the school can't control? They can run to the bathroom, sit in a stall, ask ChatGPT for answers, copy them to a document, come back to class, and transfer the text on that document into their assignment and turn it in. (They can do that at home, too. Or on the bus. Or quietly under the desk in the classroom.)

Whether to block ChatGPT school-wide is still a decision schools and districts have to make.

The bigger decision is: what will teaching and learning look like going forward now that this technology is available?

(Check out the section below called, "Should we block it or try to ban it?")

4. ChatGPT and forthcoming chatbots like it have their limitations.

When you load ChatGPT for the first time, it even tells you what some of its limitations are. Here are a few that it states -- and some others to be aware of for schools/classrooms:

- **It may occasionally generate incorrect information.** As of publication of this post, it's still in "free research preview." That means it's an imperfect product that they're trying to improve.

- **It may occasionally produce harmful instructions or biased content.** Any artificial intelligence is as good as the dataset it's drawing from -- and how it uses it. It has to make judgment calls just like humans do. Bias exists in judgments. It's still learning how to work with and eliminate its bias.

- **It has limited knowledge of world and events after 2021.** Think of its dataset in a sealed box. It isn't drawing from current events. It can't pull anything from social media. It can't even search the active internet.

- **It won't make ethical decisions for you.** I've asked it a few things where it has to make decisions based on morals, ethics and personal values. It has declined, explaining that that's beyond the scope of what it's trained to do.

- **I've heard that it struggles to do math sometimes.** I admit this is a really, really subjective thing to include with very little to back it up. I keep seeing posts on social media about this. Take this for what it's worth to you.

5. School/class uses of ChatGPT, chatbots, and AI aren't all bad.

Lots of teachers are making judgment calls about the use of this new technology, and many are concerned about its immediate impacts. Here's the truth: **it'll make lots of teachers reconsider some types of assignments they'll assign going**

forward. Hey, they don't want to know how a bot will respond to their prompts, questions, and assignments. They want to use it to gauge learning in a human being. It makes sense.

But let's put it this way. There are some really, really mindless, terrible writing prompts out there ... and math worksheets ... and project assignments. If we're looking long-term, **this technology will eventually start to push some of those terrible assignments out** and force us to come up with something new. It'll probably be painful, and many of us will probably hate parts of the process. But in the end, we will evolve to something better.j

AI isn't going away. But if we ask students to write on paper right now -- as a stopgap, we know it's coming from their own brains. But please don't long-term plan like this.

Also -- just like we did with the calculator, Wikipedia and Google searches -- students and teachers will find productive, meaningful ways to use this new technology for teaching and learning. (More on that below.)

6. Students will have to learn how to navigate life with AI.

Big picture, this is a shift students will deal with for the rest of their lives. Artificial intelligence will continue to get better and better. This version of ChatGPT is the weakest, most rudimentary artificial intelligence of its kind our students will ever

use. My friend Holly Clark called it the "Commodore 64 of AI" -- a technology that was revolutionary at the time but is now seen as antiquated and obsolete.

Students will have to wrestle with **questions of humanity** -- what sets us apart as humans? When should AI be used, and when shouldn't it be?

They'll wrestle with **questions of obsolescence** -- what can I do that AI can't do? How can I do my best to be sure my work, my passions, my place in this world isn't replaced by artificial intelligence?

They'll wrestle with **ethical questions** -- how can AI use be fair, equitable, unbiased, good? What happens if it gets in the hands of bad actors? How can I make sure I'm using it in an ethical way?

Big-picture, AI will cause a shift students will deal with for the rest of their lives. They'll wrestle with questions of humanity, questions of obsolescence, ethical questions. Let's help them with this