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EDUCATION

Some Teachers Want Students to Learn with AI

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Many educators fear students will use the artificial intelligence (AI) tool ChatGPT to write their reports or cheat on homework. But other teachers are including it in the classroom.

Donnie Piercey is a teacher in Lexington, Kentucky. He told his 23 5th-grade students to try and outsmart the tool that was creating writing assignments. Piercey says his job is to prepare students for a world where knowledge of AI will be required.

He describes ChatGPT as just the newest technology in his 17 years of teaching that caused concern about the possibility of cheating. They include tools to help with math and spelling as well as Google, Wikipedia and YouTube.

"As educators, we haven't figured out the best way to use artificial intelligence yet," he added. "But it's coming, whether we want it to or not."

One lesson in his class was a writing game between students and the machine. Piercey asked students to "Find the Bot." Each student wrote a short report about boxer Muhammad Ali. Then they tried to figure out which was written by ChatGPT.

Teaching a lower grade level, Piercey is less worried about cheating than high school teachers. His school system has blocked students from ChatGPT but permits teachers to use it.

Many educators around the country say schools need time to figure out the chatbot. But they also say a ban will be useless against students that are good at technology and can work around it.

ChatGPT quickly became popular after its November launch. Other companies like Google have since released their versions of AI-powered chatbots.

At the Future of Education Technology Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, last month, Texas math teacher Heather Brantley gave a talk on the *Magic of Writing with AI for all Subjects.*

"I'm using ChatGPT to **enhance** all my lessons," she told *The Associated Press*. The tool is blocked for students but opens to teachers at her school. She said she asked the chatbot to create real-world examples for her math class.

For a lesson about slope, or direction of a line in algebra, the chatbot suggested students build **ramps** out of cardboard. The students could then measure the slope. For teaching about surface area, the chatbot said students would see how the idea works in real life when **wrapping** gifts or building a cardboard box, said Brantley.

Students in Piercey's class said working with a chatbot makes learning fun.

After playing "Find the Bot," Piercey asked his class what skills it helped them learn. "How to properly **summarize** and correctly capitalize words and use commas," said one student. Another student felt that sentences written by students "have a little more feeling... More **flavor**"

Students Olivia Laksi and Katherine McCormick, both 10, said they can see the good and bad parts of working with chatbots. They can help students who have trouble putting their thoughts into writing. And there is no limit to the creativity it can add to classwork.

McCormick said students can use it for suggestions, but should not use it to do all the work.

"You shouldn't take **advantage** of it," McCormick said. "You're not learning anything if you type in what you want, and then it gives you the answer."

I'm Dan Novak.

Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting by The Associated Press.

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Words in This Story

grade — *n.* a level of study that is completed by a student during one year

assignment — *n.* a job or duty that is given to someone

figure — *v.* to understand or find

enhance — *v.* to increase or improve

ramp — *n.* a usually sloping road that connects a road to a highway

wrapping — *n.* a thin piece of paper, plastic, fabric, etc., that covers or surrounds something to protect it

summarize — *v.* to tell again using fewer words

flavor — *n.* the quality of something that you can taste

advantage — *n.* something that helps to make someone or something better or more likely to succeed than others