



Fuchun Secondary School teacher Kenneth Yee using ChatGPT in his class. He tells his students that they need to check the accuracy of the notes generated by ChatGPT.
PHOTOS: RYAN CHIONG, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ChatGPT: What parents need to know

The AI tool can make learning more fun, but adults need to provide guidance if young children want to use it



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Chemistry teacher Leung Yulun uses ChatGPT in his lessons to reinforce his students’ learning by getting them to assess if the information provided by the text generator is accurate.

This has made learning more fun and relevant for his students, he said.

“When an answer ChatGPT provided was inaccurate, I showed them that asking the question in smaller parts gave the correct answer. So they also learnt how to ask questions skilfully,” he added.

He is one of the early adopters of the artificial intelligence (AI) tool in Yuan Ching Secondary School, but more educators may soon use it in their lessons.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has encouraged teachers to be open to using AI tools such as ChatGPT to support their work, and provided some guidance in

March on how to use them effectively to enhance teaching and learning.

For instance, teachers should check the answers provided by the text generator against other reliable sources.

They should also advise students on how and when to use these tools, and regularly remind them of the importance of academic integrity, such as by stating when they have used AI tools and to cite sources accurately.

Replying to queries from The Straits Times, MOE said that generative AI tools such as ChatGPT present opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning, as with any technology.

“It is important to harness its potential to benefit students, while managing its related risks,” said a ministry spokesman.

The spokesman added that teachers should continue to apply their professional judgment in using suitable pedagogies, while still emphasising foundational skills and concepts.

Another avenue for teachers to get tips on using AI tools is an online learning community called the Singapore Learning Designers Circle.

On this Facebook group, teachers from Fuchun Secondary School,

Early access to ChatGPT could lead to an over-reliance on the AI tool in writing and maths tasks as it can generate compositions on a par with middle- to high-performing secondary school students.

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DR WONG LUNG HSIANG, a senior education research scientist from the National Institute of Education

for instance, shared how they used ChatGPT to scaffold students’ learning in essay writing in English and to provide differentiated support to students.

Mr Kenneth Yee, who teaches English and literature at the school, used ChatGPT for a lesson on descriptive writing in which students had to tackle the question, “Describe the sights and sounds of a festival in Singapore or another country”.

Students used ChatGPT to generate relevant descriptive language and details, before coming up with their own examples to make their writing more personal.

For literature, Mr Yee gets his students to use ChatGPT to create their own chapter summaries and character analyses.

“I emphasise that they need to check the accuracy of the notes generated. Students can build on these to make the notes personalised to their needs,” he said.

Ms Pearlyn Lim, head of department for English and literature, said ChatGPT is like an all-in-one tool encompassing the dictionary, calculator and Internet, that can help students with different abilities.

“It can work like a teaching assistant addressing questions, ranging from basic to challenging, posed by

the students. Now instead of having to wait for me to go over and answer their questions, students can ask ChatGPT first,” she said.

SHOULD PARENTS LET THEIR KIDS USE CHATGPT AT HOME?

While there are guidelines for teachers to use ChatGPT in school, parents should also provide guidance if their young children want to use ChatGPT at home, said Dr Wong Lung Hsiang, a senior education research scientist from the National Institute of Education.

Dr Wong, who has done extensive research on artificial intelligence tools in teaching and learning, said the over-reliance on such tools, which are powerful but with limitations, can be detrimental to young children’s learning.

He noted that ChatGPT’s terms of use states that users must be 18 years or older, but it does not ask users to verify their age when creating an account.

He said the tool is not meant for pre-school and primary school pupils, as they need to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills with little or no tool support before they move on to developing higher-order skills.