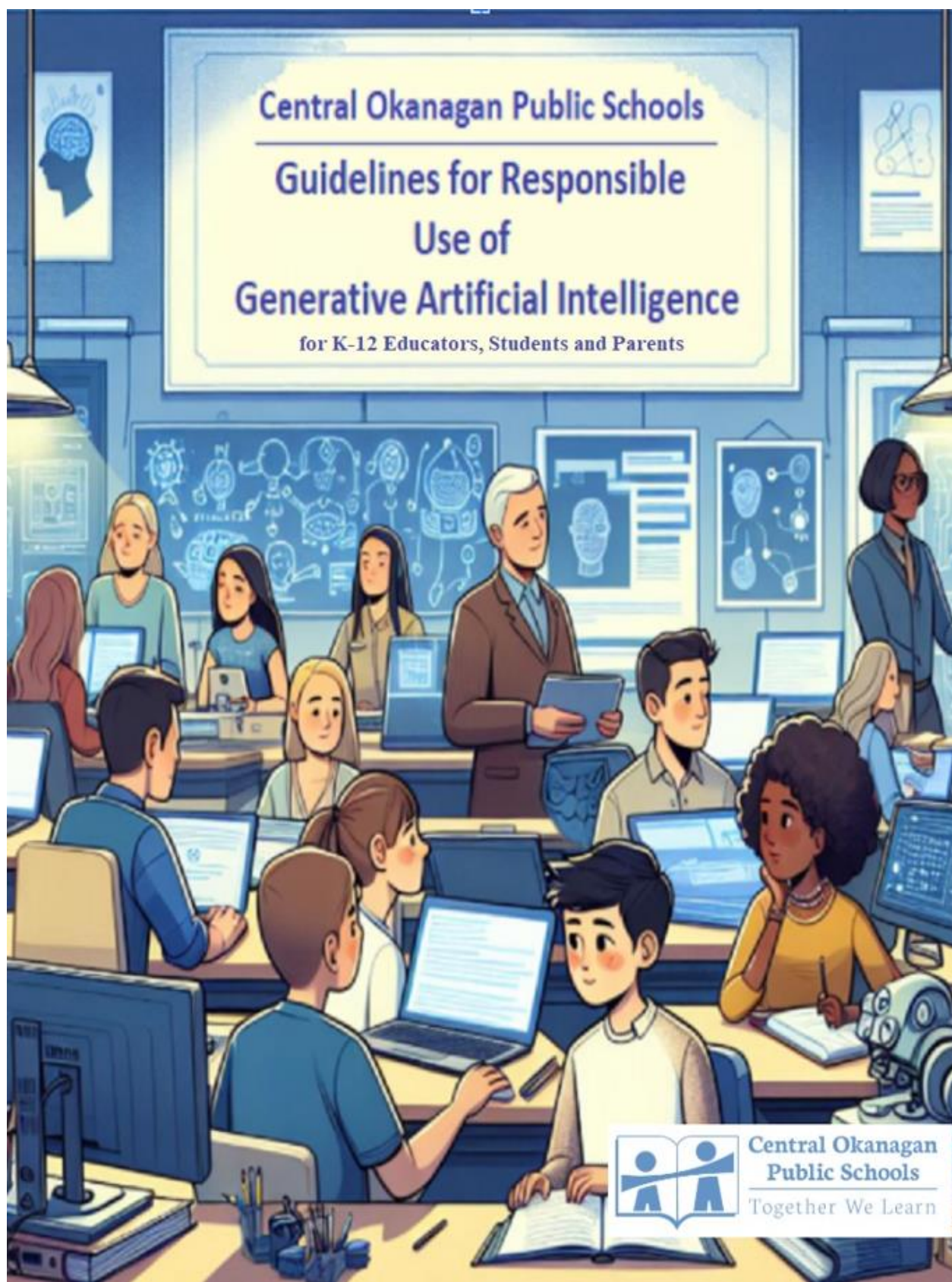




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**Central Okanagan Public Schools Guidelines for the Responsible Use
of Generative Artificial Intelligence (for K-12 Educators, Students, and Parents)**

Defined Purpose	3
Shared Understanding	3
What is Artificial Intelligence?	3
What is Generative Artificial Intelligence?	3
Why is This Important?	4
Connection to Learning	5
The District Strategic Plan	5
Core Guiding Values	8
Responsibility	8
Privacy and Security Concerns	8
District Approved Tools	8
Misinformation/Disinformation	9
Cybersecurity Risks	9
Equity	9
Accessibility	10
Usability	10
Empathy	11
Learning Considerations	11
Co-Constructed Expectations	11
Triangulated Assessment Practices	12
Honesty	13
Academic Integrity	13
Transparent Use	13
AI Writing Detection	14
Respect	15
Inherent Bias	15
Indigenous Perspective	15
Environmental Stewardship	16
References	17

Defined Purpose

This document provides clear guidelines and understanding for K-12 educators, students, and parents around generative artificial intelligence within Central Okanagan Public Schools (SD23). This document will provide recommendations and considerations to support the use of Gen AI from a human-centric perspective with the goal of promoting our core values of responsibility, equity, empathy, honesty, and respect. The recommendations in this document are aligned with the [“Considerations for using AI tools in K-12 Schools”](#) from the BC Ministry of Education and Childcare, to support digital literacy and the use of artificial intelligence in education.

Shared Understanding

To align our thinking, and to realize the significant impact and change that artificial intelligence will have on the learning environment, it is important to have a shared understanding of the key concepts and technical language utilized throughout this document. As this document aims to connect with various audiences, including K-12 educators, students, and parents, it is crucial to have a shared understanding to ensure clear communication. [Refer to the “Shared Understanding” infographic.](#)

What is Artificial Intelligence?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that aims to create systems that can perform tasks that mimic human intelligence. These tasks include learning from experiences, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and understanding spoken language. AI gives machines the opportunity to perform tasks like humans, with speed and precision. AI can be categorized based on its functionality and capabilities. There are three types of artificial intelligence:

1. **Reactive** - Tools that respond to specific inputs or situations without learning from past experiences (e.g., Roomba, virtual assistants like Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant).
2. **Predictive** - Tools that analyze historical data and experiences to predict future events or behaviors (e.g., Netflix recommendations, Grammarly, predictive text, Google Maps).
3. **Generative** - Tools that generate new content or outputs, often creating something novel from learned patterns (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Perplexity, Claude).

What is Generative Artificial Intelligence?

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) represents a significant advancement in technology, with the potential to change how we interact with digital content. At its core, Gen AI begins with a vast dataset, which may encompass a variety of formats such as text files, web pages, and images. This dataset serves as the foundation for training a sophisticated computer algorithm known as a Large Language Model (LLM).

These models are adept at identifying and predicting patterns within language, making them the essential framework of Gen AI systems. LLMs undergo extensive training to recognize intricate

language structures and generate responses that mimic human-like text. Once an LLM is fully trained, it can be utilized to develop applications and/or chatbot tools like ChatGPT or Copilot.

Chatbots are designed to simulate human conversation, offering significant benefits for enhancing communication and providing instant support to users. These applications are powerful tools capable of generating personalized content that aligns with a user's specific instructions. These tools can facilitate learning, streamline administrative tasks, and offer personalized assistance, making information more accessible and engaging. However, it is essential to recognize that chatbots also carry the risk of spreading bias, misinformation, or disinformation if not responsibly managed.

The quality of the output generated by these tools is heavily influenced by the quality and diversity of the training data and their effectiveness depends on the skills and knowledge of those prompting them. It is also important to note that while AI tools can mimic human conversation, they do not have emotions or the ability to make ethical decisions. As we navigate the evolving landscape of Gen AI, it is important for users to understand both the potential and the limitations of these technologies. By doing so, we can better prepare for a future where AI plays an increasingly integral role in our lives.

Why is This Important?

The rapid advancement and integration of AI technology across the world is quickly changing the landscape across multiple workplaces and educational environments. The "Artificial Intelligence Revolution" is being seen as a pivotal "hinge in history", a technical advancement that will have outreaching global impact similar to previous technological advancements, like the printing press, the telephone, television, the personal computer, and the internet. This technology will have lasting and far-reaching effects across many career sectors.

In the education environment, unfiltered access to Gen AI tools has triggered an immediate disruption. Students have shared that "a lot of people are abusing Gen AI and not learning anything from it; they need to learn how to use it properly". Some students stated they are "excited about the potential of Gen AI" while others are "scared it will reduce human creativity or be misused". Many students mentioned that they need opportunities to learn about Gen AI, with the support and guidance of their teachers. The formal education system is designed to provide students with learning opportunities to develop the future skills needed to thrive in the world. In a world with Gen AI, students must develop the mindset and skills to be able to critically think about and safely utilize this technology.

Connection to Learning

The District Strategic Plan

Our intentions are to empower and support learners to develop the attributes and competencies needed to thrive in an ever-changing complex world. In the context of the educational environment, the use of technology should be meaningful and enhance, but not replace, the valuable human connection and social nature of learning.

Educators who embrace Gen AI as a technological advancement in support of student learning will equip students with the skills needed to thrive in a future integrated with AI.

Gen AI tools have tremendous potential to:

- Create safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments using assistive technologies to overcome barriers to learning.
- Provide access to creative tools inspiring learners to follow their passions.
- Generate diverse learning materials and offer personalized learning experiences.
- Provide educators with unprecedented capabilities to refine and enrich their lesson plans.
- Provide efficiencies that allow educators to devote more time to fostering student interactions, nurturing relationships, and delivering personalized instruction.

To ensure the use of Gen AI in the education environment is aligned with our values and beliefs about learning, we have anchored our thinking in our District's Strategic Plan to uphold our collective vision of "Together We Learn".



The overarching goal of the District Strategic Plan is to support all learners to develop the foundational skills and core curricular competencies to empower them to follow their passions and strengths to thrive holistically as resilient and engaged global citizens. **The four compass points in the strategic plan are:**

- **Equity and Excellence in Learning**
- **Transformative Leadership**
- **Family and Community Engagement**
- **System Wellbeing**

These four compass points are **supported by five core guiding values:**

- **Responsibility**
- **Equity**
- **Empathy**
- **Honesty**
- **Respect**

It is within these five core values, which we will frame our considerations and recommendations to outline the use of Gen AI in Central Okanagan Public Schools. These core cultural values provide a much-needed frame to ensure that Gen AI use in K-12 education supports the needs of all learners and honours the cultural differences in our community. [Refer to the “SD23 AI Guiding Principles” infographic.](#)

In a world with AI, it is these core guiding values that make us human. In a rapidly changing world, we need to focus on those qualities that help us to be critical thinkers and learners. Our students are already becoming aware of this as they explore the potential of AI to provide answers and impact the formal education system. Some students mentioned “I don’t think that AI could replace teachers. Teachers show a lot of compassion towards students, and it is comforting to have a teacher there. Learning with AI is like an online course. It feels empty and bland because there is no connection, no one there to help you”. Others reflected by saying “I think it really depends on the teacher, if they just stand at the front of the class and give you the information, then AI can do that.” Some students commented that “school needs to be about hands-on learning, building social skills and connections, AI can’t do that”. Many of these shared beliefs emphasize the importance of a learning first approach when considering the role of Gen AI in education.

As we have collaborated with educational partners during the creation of this guidance document, it has become clear, that only through thoughtful discussions and shared learning experiences, will we develop a greater understanding of the impact that AI will have on the education system and the world around us. With so much uncertainty and change yet to come, what needs to ground us in our thinking is the importance of our values and beliefs about learning. AI will not replace the need for formal education as long as we continue to focus on what matters the most, the qualities that make us human.

Core Guiding Values

Responsibility

Gen AI use should be both responsible and accountable. We must commit to using Gen AI in ways that meet our expectations, and those of our community. This involves the continuous evaluation of Gen AI tools to ensure they are being used to meet educational goals, uphold community values, while protecting the privacy and security of all users. [Refer to the “Responsibility” infographic.](#)

The responsible use of Gen AI tools by educators and students in Central Okanagan Public Schools is inherent across board policies and referenced below.

Policy 486 – [Responsible Student Use of Network Services and Digital Technologies](#)

Policy 386 – [Responsible Employee Use of Network Services and Digital Technologies](#)

Privacy and Security Concerns

Gen AI tools are foundationally built on vast data sets, large language models (LLMs), and machine learning. These tools are trained on massive quantities of content and data from the internet, including user data and personal information. Quite often this data has been utilized without obtained consent. Therefore, it is imperative that Gen AI users exercise caution, using only district approved tools, and limiting the amount of personal information and data that is shared. Gen AI users should keep shared data general and exclude any identifiable information that is not publicly accessible such as name, address, birthday, grades, demographics, and health information.

District Approved Tools

Before using any digital resource (website, online app, Gen AI tool, etc.) with students, it is the responsibility of the educator to ensure the digital resource has been approved for use by the District Privacy Manager and is included in the [approved digital tools list](#). If the digital resource has not been approved, the educator must request approval using the district online [application form](#). Please note that the approved digital tool list is constantly being revised in compliance with directions from the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Digital tools need to be reassessed every calendar year as they are updated and privacy policies change.

For any digital resource where student data (personal information) is stored outside of Canada, parental consent should be obtained. A [parent consent form](#) should be sent home and include what personal information will be used, how the digital resource will benefit their child, and that their child’s data may/will be stored outside of Canada and subject to the laws of that country.

In addition, many Gen AI tools have specified restrictions on the minimum age of its users due to the sensitive nature of the content that can be accessed. Many AI tools are intended to be used by students older than 13 years of age (including ChatGPT). Reading the privacy policy for a particular AI software/application will help determine if there are any age restrictions. Educators should be mindful that some AI software/applications may not be developmentally appropriate for students

even if they do not have specified age restrictions. Unfortunately, this limits many of the Gen AI tools that can be approved and made available for student use within the K-12 public education system.

Obtaining parental consent and abiding by the recommendation age restrictions are legal obligations by educators to protect the rights and freedoms of their students according to the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FIPPA\)](#).

Misinformation/Disinformation

We now live in a world where media content is no longer solely created by humans. Gen AI tools have the ability to create original content and media (print, photos, audio, and video). Because of the ease of use of these tools, they can be utilized to create very realistic and believable media content. All Gen AI tools are prone to "hallucinations", creating content that is often presented as fact, but is completely fabricated and false. GenAI users should verify the information generated by AI, being mindful as not to perpetuate and spread misinformation. Misinformation is defined as the sharing of false or inaccurate information without harmful intent. Quite often, it is a lack of understanding that leads to the unintentional spread of misinformation.

In misguided hands, these tools can be used to spread disinformation and mistrust. Disinformation is a form of false information deliberately spread to deceive people for personal or political reasons. It is done to shape public perception, influence elections, destabilize societies or gain economic advantages. Social media platforms are used for rapid dissemination and leveraging sophisticated technology to create convincing fake content. Users are responsible for ensuring their use of Gen AI tools does not knowingly contribute to the creation and dissemination of disinformation (bullying and harassment, misrepresentation of students and staff, and deep fakes).

Cybersecurity Risks

Gen AI tools are rapidly becoming the tools of bad actors to efficiently create undetectable fraudulent communication and content to deceive technology users to steal their personal information for financial gain.

Phishing is the type of cyber-attack that involves fraudulent attempts to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, credit card details and other personal data by impersonating a trustworthy person in electronic communications.

With the rise of AI-generated emails and messages, these fraudulent attempts can mimic the style and language of real communication, making phishing and fraud attempts more convincing and harder to detect. It is our responsibility to be vigilant and cautious when communicating using any digital tools. It is important for users to use critical thinking skills before engaging in any questionable conversations.

Equity

Gen AI use should promote fairness and equitable access to personalized educational opportunities. We must be committed to ensure that all learners, regardless of socio economics,

culture, background, or abilities, have equitable access to the benefits of these technologies.

[Refer to the “Equity” infographic.](#)

Accessibility

Since students do not always have equal access to technology at home, schools are the best place to provide scaffolded opportunities for students to learn about Gen AI and help close the digital divide. AI use should be modelled appropriately, to ensure students are safe, protect their privacy, and use it ethically (i.e. academic integrity).

Many experts argue for responsible development and use of Gen AI rather than complete avoidance or blocking as this may be counterproductive. By denying students access to these tools, we may be limiting opportunities for them to develop important skills needed to thrive in the “future workplace”. Gen AI has the potential to enhance student’s educational experience, improve student’s learning outcomes, and support student’s individual learning needs (IEPs/AIPs).

Usability

Technology companies are pouring tremendous amounts of money and resources into creating Gen AI tools, providing consumers with increasing options to choose from. There are many different Gen AI tools available to create different media outputs (text, audio, video, etc.). Many of these tools are initially available to users for free, providing users trial access with limited output. As tools become more established and the usability more refined, companies usually switch to a paid premium model where users pay for access to advanced features and/or faster content generation times. Because of this, we encourage the use of district-licensed tools to provide an equitable level of access and usability across the district.

We recommend the Gen AI tool, **Microsoft Copilot** over other chatbots due to its security features and integration with the existing district Microsoft infrastructure.

Educators can access Copilot by logging in at <https://copilot.microsoft.com/> using their SD23 Microsoft account credentials (firstname.lastname@sd23.bc.ca).

Signing into Copilot will ensure that the data inputted into Copilot is protected within our organizational framework and not used for AI training, providing a more secure environment for enhancing learning and building upon core competencies such as Communication, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Creative and Critical Thinking.

Even though Copilot is secure, educators still must be selective and cautious about the data they share, keeping information provided to general data and excluding personal information like names, addresses, and birthdays to safeguard privacy.

Empathy

The inherent value of the formal educational environment is supported by the social nature of learning. We learn through experiences. We learn through social interactions. We learn from collective knowledge building. The use of educational technologies should facilitate human connection, not replace it. Gen AI use should enhance learning and reduce barriers. By embracing a culture of empathy, we will promote understanding, encourage compassion, enhance communication, support inclusive learning environments, foster connections, and build relationships. [Refer to the “Empathy” infographic.](#)

Learning Considerations

Gen AI can enhance the classroom experience, offering personalized and adaptive learning experiences to support individual students' needs. Gen AI can tailor educational content based on individual strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and progress. It can create a more engaging and effective learning path by adjusting difficulty levels, providing targeted feedback, and generating customized learning materials in real-time. However, its integration requires careful consideration, as we have already seen it create challenges for content-based learning models primarily focused on knowledge acquisition and product driven summative assessment.

As students gain access to Gen AI tools that can generate content, educators will need to adapt to strategies that highlight learning as an authentic and meaningful process. This may involve shifting assignments to focus on further developing curricular and core competency-based skills (Creative and Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal and Social Responsibility). Some examples include assignments such as debate, Socratic discussions, inquiry, project-based learning, design thinking, and other collaborative activities and reflective assessments that emphasize process over products.

Co-Constructed Expectations

The rapid expansion of Gen AI tools into the learning environment has created a lot of uncertainty and confusion for educators, students, and parents, leaving us asking many questions. Are we allowed to use these tools? When can we use these tools? Are there times when we cannot use these tools? In the absence of any conversations and guidance, we can only assume that AI will be used. Everyone benefits from the establishment of clear guidelines on when and how Gen AI can be used in the classroom learning environment. These guidelines will vary across different grades, subjects, and course material.

It is recommended that classroom educators co-construct the expectations with their students on how Gen AI should be used. Co-constructing expectations supports students to develop critical thinking about Gen AI, honours student voice, and develops a shared responsibility. When students use Gen AI, they should be taught how to properly cite its use, and how to reflect on the use of AI to support their learning. [Refer to the “Appropriate Use” infographic.](#)

It is important for educators to communicate and provide clear expectations to students on the acceptable use of Gen AI before each assignment or task so there is no misunderstanding if students can use Gen AI or not. To strengthen the communication and connections in our school communities, this information should be shared with parents and guardians.

By fostering digital literacy and competencies-based skills, students will be able to navigate the complexities of AI tools and use them responsibly. Educators that equip students with the skills to use Gen AI effectively and ethically will prepare students to thrive in a world increasingly shaped by technology. Educators should support students to develop digital literacy skills needed to evaluate and check AI-generated content for accuracy. Students should be taught the limitations of Gen AI tools which are subject to hallucinations (inaccuracies), misinformation, and bias.

Triangulated Assessment Practices

Many educators are excited about the potential to use Gen AI tools to streamline the assessment process and save time. While Gen AI tools may be good at automating routine workflows and creating efficiencies, they often do so by following a set of prompted rules, removing the uniqueness of the learning environment, treating every student like a "data point". Educators should exercise caution and never rely solely on Gen AI output to assess and evaluate the process of learning. It is important that Gen AI tools do not replace an educator's professional judgement around assessment and evaluation practices, as these tools can be unreliable for grading. Instead, educators should be encouraged to lean into the strength of their teacher-student relationships to triangulate evidence of student learning through the ongoing documentation of conversations, observations, and products.

Honesty

The use of Gen AI should foster a culture of honesty and transparency among all educational partners, including administrators, educators, students, and families. All Gen AI users are encouraged to be open about how and when Gen AI tools are utilized and ensure the use of these tools is ethical and does not misrepresent oneself or ideas. [Refer to the “Honesty” infographic.](#)

Academic Integrity

The concepts of cheating and plagiarism have been discussed in educational settings long before the emergence of Gen AI tools. However, the introduction of these tools into the educational environment has many educators, students and parents discussing the relevance of such topics in a world with Gen AI, with easy access to generated ideas and content.

Academic integrity is essential for maintaining the credibility of educational institutions and fostering a culture of learning. To ensure responsible use of Gen AI in academic settings, students should prioritize originality and attribution by clearly distinguishing AI-generated content from their own work.

Gen AI should be viewed as a collaborative tool and learning partner that enhances understanding rather than a substitute for independent thought. It is crucial to follow proper citation practices and to be aware of AI's limitations including potential biases and inaccuracies, and to verify information independently. Students should be having conversations with their teachers about when and how they should be using Gen AI.

Transparent Use

To learn and thrive in a world with AI, we need to engage all educational partners in thoughtful dialogue regarding the appropriate use of Gen AI tools. We must embrace a culture of transparency where the use of Gen AI tools is modeled and openly discussed. Whether it is a student using AI tools to support their learning, or an educator using AI tools for fresh ideas or administrative efficiencies, the use of Gen AI tools should be open and transparent.

To use AI ethically users should consider applying the acronym **“EVERY”** as a framework for ethical Gen AI use.

- **E**valuate the initial output to see if it meets the intended purpose and your needs.
- **V**erify facts, figures, quotes, and data using reliable sources to ensure there are no hallucinations or bias.
- **E**dit your prompt and ask follow-up questions to have the AI improve its output.
- **R**evise the results to reflect your unique needs, style, or tone. AI output is a great starting point but should never be the final product.
- **Y**ou are responsible for everything you create with AI. Always be transparent about how you have used these tools.

AI Writing Detection

Gen AI websites and applications can create content that is exceedingly difficult to distinguish from human created content. Some educators have explored easy solutions to identify student work that has been created using Gen AI, and since the release of Gen AI chatbot applications like ChatGPT, there are a few companies that have attempted to create AI powered tools to detect Gen AI created content.

Teachers are encouraged to create inclusive and supportive classroom learning environments, built through strong trusting teacher-student relationships where student's respect their teacher and the teacher empowers the student to take ownership of their learning. As such, we do not recommend or support educators using AI writing detection tools for several well documented reasons:

- AI detection tools are inaccurate.
- There are many known techniques that Gen AI users can employ to "scrub clean" or "humanize" AI generated content, making it undetectable.
- AI detection tools can produce false positive results that may damage teacher-student relationships caused by accusations of academic misconduct.
- The utilization of AI detection tools can create a classroom environment of suspicion.
- AI detection tools can erode the trust between students and educators.
- AI detection tools are inherently biased towards English Language Learners and low-level learners, indicating more false positives for these groups of students.
- The use of AI detection tools raises concerns about student data privacy as students would need to give permission to have their original work uploaded and shared to utilize the AI detection tool.

Instead of using such tools, educators are encouraged to rely on their teacher-student relationships and the triangulation of assessment data, to determine when students have submitted work that does not represent their own thinking. For educators focusing on the process of learning, as opposed to the products, they can usually tell when work has been submitted that does not represent a student's learning. A quick glance through a document's revision history can provide excellent insight into the steps used to create the work.

Respect

Gen AI use should support learning and personal growth while upholding ethical and the principles of respect and care for our community. We must respect the intellectual property rights of creators and ensure that Gen AI tools are used in compliance with copyright laws. Great care should be taken so that Gen AI tools are utilized ethically in ways to promote respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. [Refer to the “Respect” infographic.](#)

Inherent Bias

Great caution should be taken when using Gen AI tools to create content representative of diverse cultures. Any tools/materials developed with Gen AI should be culturally sensitive towards local communities in their creation, ensuring they align with cultural values, traditions, and ways of knowing and being. While Gen AI can be convenient for gathering information from various sources, it can also be a concern. The data used to train AI models is often used without context or permission and can omit the voices and perspectives of underrepresented groups in our communities. Gen AI can generate content that may unintentionally include biases, perpetuate racist ideas, and uphold colonial perspectives.

Recognizing the inherent bias in Gen AI content can be difficult. Users must look at all AI generated content with a critical thinking lens. Through engaging in meaningful conversation with others and/or inner dialogue and reflection, users should ask themselves, "does the generated content perpetuate harmful stereotypes or misrepresent difference in gender, ethnicity.

Indigenous Perspective

In Indigenous cultures, oral traditions play a crucial role for transferring knowledge from one generation to the next. These oral traditions preserve history, cultural values, and insights from the land itself. Indigenous peoples learn from their environment, understanding plants, animals, and the landscape from their community.

When teaching and seeking materials to support Indigenous education, it is important to use resources created by Indigenous people themselves. These individuals have firsthand experience and deep knowledge of First-Peoples Principles, land-based knowledge, and the truth and reconciliation process.

When looking for authentic local indigenous resources, please refer to the following sources: <https://indigenouseducation.sd23.bc.ca/>, <https://www.wfn.ca/>, <https://www.okib.ca/>, <https://syilx.org/about-us/syilx-nation/>, or <https://www.fnesc.ca/>.

“I don’t feel that Indigenous knowledge systems should be put into AI, simply because it replaces elders and real people. We must rely on the education we receive from nature, from the birds, the trees, and the sun, that is the highest intelligence that we have. And so, I just want you to know that our elders are still especially important to our knowledge systems and to our education” (Murdoch, 2023)

Environmental Stewardship

As Gen AI tools become more prolific throughout our society, so does the information available about the potential environmental impacts of Gen AI on the world around us. Gen AI users should be mindful and consider the environmental costs prior to using such energy hungry technology tools. For example, the energy consumed for each Gen AI prompt is potentially 10x greater than that consumed in performing an internet search using a web browser. Not to mention the vast number of resources utilized to build the data center infrastructure and the energy consumed to train the LLM in the first place.

Currently the available environmental data is quite limited. We do know that without political pressure, considering the environmental footprint of Gen AI models, is low on the list of priorities of AI companies as they race to outcompete each other. There are reports emerging that Gen AI data centers could consume similar resources to countries the size of France and Germany. In the absence of any real hard data, do we really know how much energy, water, and precious metals are consumed? Do we really know how much CO₂, pollution, and e-waste is generated? Will the technological advancements in AI technology outweigh the environmental impacts? Currently we do not have a way to comprehensively understand the impact of this technology on our natural world, as the AI industry is largely unregulated and rapidly growing. With such uncertainty, the choice to use AI tools should be purposeful and made with respect for our world, with its finite resources and the future of humanity in mind.

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