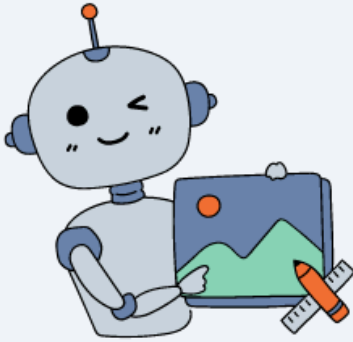


SmartStart Newsletter

Latest news from the SmartStart Teacher Academy



smart start

ERASMUS+
Teacher Academy

Training & Events

Pan-European Conference on Digital Education: 28.05.2026

The conference will be dedicated to the AIDEA project and will focus on **artificial intelligence in education**. Primera's Pan-EU digital learning events are successful in delivering a European dimension in continuous professional development across Europe, as teaching practices are sourced from all participating countries and address common challenges from different cultural perspectives.

Website:

[https://www.erasmuspluscourses.com/pan-eu-conference-on-digital-education.html#:~:text=Free%2Dof%2Dcharge%20monthly%20event,30%20CET%20\(Brussels%20Time\).](https://www.erasmuspluscourses.com/pan-eu-conference-on-digital-education.html#:~:text=Free%2Dof%2Dcharge%20monthly%20event,30%20CET%20(Brussels%20Time).)

We are social!

Check out our Social Media Presence on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to stay updated on project insights, teacher training activities, and the latest developments in AI in education. Join the conversation and discover how SmartStart is shaping innovative and responsible teaching practices.



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We are social!



AI Tools



Educational AI Websites: Risks and Privacy Security

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The Artificial Intelligence Industry is now a part of Education in all its aspects, regardless of its benefits and risks. Therefore, the implications of AI integration in education, and its findings apply universally to all AI websites and platforms — not only those specifically mentioned in our Newsletter. While this document highlights some of the most widely used AI tools for educational purposes, it is essential that users recognize that risks exist in the use of any AI platform, regardless of its popularity or perceived reliability.

Disclaimer: AI Privacy and Data Security in Education

The use of Artificial Intelligence in educational settings presents transformative opportunities but also significant risks regarding data privacy and the commercialization of personal information. This disclaimer serves to inform educators, students, and administrators of the potential hazards associated with interacting with AI-driven platforms.

1. Data Collection and Commercialization Risk

Users should be aware that many AI developers acquire extensive data under the premise of providing personalized services (Bu, 2022). This data is often used to make inferences about individual interests and behaviors, which may then be "sold" to third-party firms for profit-driven, non-educational purposes (Bu, 2022; Huang, 2023). Profit-seeking is inherent to the business models of many private AI developers, creating a persistent risk that the security and privacy of teachers' and students' data may be compromised for commercial gain (Bu, 2022).

2. Privacy Risks on Educational AI Websites

Educational AI websites, including popular Learning Management Systems and generative tools, often collect a wide array of sensitive information. This includes:

- **Personal Identifiers:** Names, contact information, and biological data such as fingerprints, faces, and voices used for identity verification (Hong, 2024; Mohamed, 2024).
- **Behavioral Tracking:** Real-time monitoring of classroom activities, mouse tracking, key logging, and analysis of learning habits or motivation levels (Mohamed, 2024; Ng et al, 2025).



- Sensitive Academic Records: Grades, test scores, and social interactions that are stored in cloud-based systems, increasing the risk of unauthorized access or data breaches (Akyel & Tur, 2023; Ismail & Ahmad, 2024).

3. The Notice-and-Consent Fallacy

A significant concern is the deviation from the original intention of informed consent. In many AI educational scenarios, users are required to authorize broad privacy policies simply to access the software, which effectively violates their right to autonomy and makes informed consent a "time-consuming burden" rather than a true safeguard (Huang, 2023). Furthermore, when edtech companies are acquired by for-profit equity firms, the original ethical standards and privacy protections may not be upheld under new ownership (Kelso et al, 2024).

4. International Standards and Protection

International organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF emphasize that AI systems impacting children must be human-centered and designed to protect children's specific rights (Henriques & Hartung, 2021). UNESCO's Beijing Consensus and UNICEF's Policy Guidance on AI for Children explicitly call for the protection of children's data and the prevention of unauthorized exploitation (Escobar-Planas et al, 2023; Struensee, 2021).

Recommendation: Users are urged to practice high levels of data literacy, scrutinize the privacy policies of any educational AI website they utilize, and advocate for "privacy by design" approaches from developers to mitigate the risk of institutionalized privacy violations (Huang, 2023; Ismail, 2024).

Therefore, we, the authors of the SmartStart newsletter, must explicitly state we are not responsible for any AI industry use of user information, privacy practices, or the selling of data to third parties. While our goal is to provide knowledge about the best tools available for teachers, the actual handling of data remains the sole responsibility of the respective AI platforms.

This is a necessary precaution because many AI developers are driven by profit-seeking motives, often acquiring extensive user data to make inferences about individual behaviors and interests, which may then be sold to third-party firms for non-educational purposes (Bu, 2022). Research indicates that the commercialization of data is a persistent risk in the AI industry, where sensitive information can be compromised for commercial gain (Bu, 2022; Huang, 2023). By clarifying that we are only pointing out the pedagogical benefits and disadvantages of these websites, we maintain our role as informed educators without assuming liability for the industry's data practices (Ismail, 2024; Ng et al., 2025).

This disclaimer is prominently featured to protect the StartSmart Academy Newsletter and Social Media Platforms while we continue to help primary teachers acquire the AI skills needed for the future of education.

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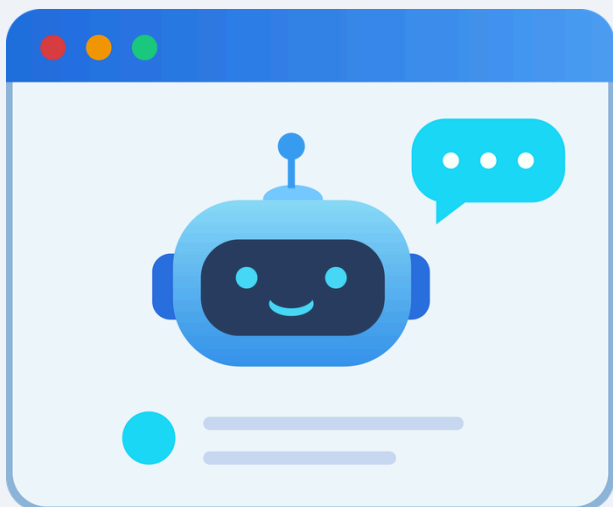
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Teacher Voices

Using AI Tools like ChatGPT in the Classroom: Three Practical Teaching Approaches

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an integral part of students' everyday lives. Therefore, it is essential that primary schools help children understand how AI works, how to use it responsibly, and how to critically evaluate its outputs. The following three classroom practices demonstrate how teachers can meaningfully integrate AI models such as ChatGPT into their lessons.

1. Comparing Information Sources: Developing Critical Thinking

One effective way of introducing AI in the classroom is by comparing different sources of information, including books, the internet (search engines), and AI tools like ChatGPT. In this lesson, students should answer questions about Germany (e.g., population, number of federal states, temperature in Berlin, differences between South and North Germany) using three different types of sources: a book, the Internet (search engine) and generative AI. After researching the information, they compare and evaluate their results and discuss differences in

accuracy, clarity, reliability and usability. Possible outcomes could be:

- ... that books provide structured and reliable information, but may be outdated.
- ... that Internet sources are current but sometimes inconsistent.
- ... that AI tools give fast answers, but can be inaccurate and often lack transparency (see article).

This example clearly demonstrates how AI can be used to foster critical thinking skills and evaluation of sources. Students learn that ChatGPT is not an authority, but a tool that must be used carefully and deliberately, and they experience both its strengths (speed, accessibility) and weaknesses (lack of sources, possible errors). Teachers can guide students to question AI-generated answers and verify them with other sources.

2. Training a Machine: Understanding How AI Works

Another example focuses on teaching students how machine learning works by letting them train a simple AI model. In this activity, students train a simple AI model „teachable machine“ to distinguish between geometric shapes such as cubes and spheres. They follow a structured process: collecting images, labeling them, training the model, testing it, and improving it. Through this process, students discover that AI needs many examples (data) to learn. The quality and variety of data influence results and the system improves through feedback and correction.

Students thus gain a basic understanding of AI mechanisms, including training, testing, and improvement. They realize that AI does not “think” but learns from patterns in data. Therefore, this example helps children understand how AI actually works. Instead of seeing AI as a “black box,” they learn that it is based on data, probability, and human input.

3. Writing a Character Description: Improving Language Skills with AI

In the third example, children describe a fictional character (“Käpt’n Zottelzeh”) as precisely as possible. Their descriptions are then used to generate images with an AI tool. When comparing the generated images with the original, students notice that unclear or incomplete descriptions lead to incorrect results. A possible outcome is that students realize that AI-generated output depends strongly on the quality of the input. Moreover, they see that vague descriptions result in inaccurate images and more detailed and precise language leads to better results. This example shows how AI can enhance writing skills and language awareness. At the same time, students learn a key principle of AI use: better prompts lead to better results.

Conclusion

These three examples show that generative AI tools like ChatGPT can be used in diverse and meaningful ways in the classroom. As emphasized in the article, successful integration requires not only technical use but also reflection on ethical and practical implications.

By comparing information sources, exploring how AI systems learn, and using AI to support creative tasks, teachers can foster essential digital competencies. Ultimately, students learn to use AI not just as a tool, but as a subject of critical understanding, preparing them for a future shaped by artificial intelligence.

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